English Readings

POEMS BY WORDSWORTH, COLERIDGE, SHELLEY, AND KEATS

LINN

ENGLISH READINGS·FOR STUDENTS

"The virtue
which is
indeed the happiness of man."

Richard De Bury.

ENGLISH READINGS FOR STUDENTS

Eg-e
5b

"On bokes for to rede I me delyte."

Chaucer.

Tuesday -

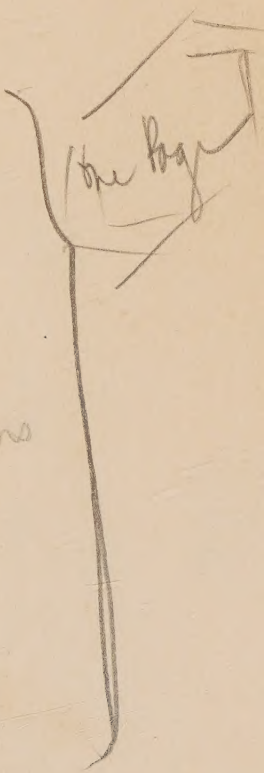
What is most useful profession ?
vocation
occupation

Short and snappy
Two pages

Friday Dreams
Friendly Fellow
Quiet Spirit
Presence

On noses
on Shower Baths

Human Nature + Chickens
Turning Points
Rock + Rock
Tides Rocks
Pieces of Poems
Asking for Raise
Acrobatic Mind
Flavor of Things



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W. George Bruce

English Readings

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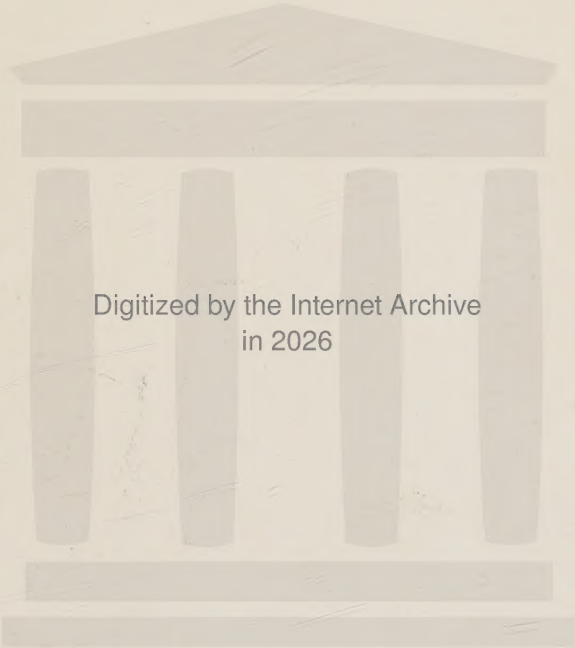

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William Wordsworth

From an engraving by Henry Meyer after a painting by Carruthers

George Ball, Jr.
"025"

POEMS

BY

WORDSWORTH, COLERIDGE, SHELLEY, AND KEATS

SELECTED AND EDITED

BY

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NEW YORK

HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

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PRINTED IN THE U. S. A.

PREFATORY NOTE

THIS volume includes all the poems by Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats contained in the fourth book of Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*, with the addition of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, *The Eve of St. Agnes*, and favorite lyrics by lesser poets.

GENERAL EDITOR.

1851

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INTRODUCTION

I

PRELUDE

THE poems in this volume are all the work of men who wrote after the year 1795. Roughly speaking, they represent the poetical spirit of the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, they are chiefly lyrical in character. Two questions about them any interested student is likely to ask. First, what was this quarter-century like, in England—what at that time particularly stirred and interested the English people? Second, what is a lyric poem?

The first question, whether the reader has asked it or not, is one which always should be asked by any reader. Literature, good or bad, never proceeds from a vacuum. A writer is always to some extent the product and the representative of the age he lives in. Now England, in this particular quarter-century, was, like the rest of Europe, perhaps most gravely interested in what we vaguely call "democracy"—that is, the question of how best to govern men by educating them to govern themselves. The French Revolution had begun in 1789, continued for five or six years, and then been succeeded by the triumphs of Napoleon. The French Revolution, like the American Revolution of 1776–1784, was in its way an indication of this great and growing world-

interest in democracy. The English poets at first, that is in 1789, welcomed the French Revolution as a manifestation of liberty. But the French patriots proceeded to the most terrible excesses; Paris was bathed in the blood of good and honorable men and women, who had committed no crime; and the older poets, Wordsworth and Coleridge and Scott, shrinking from such atrocious butchery in the name of liberty, began to doubt the value of this new "democracy." Then came Napoleon, and conquered Europe. Only one country could resist him, and that was England. So from 1797 to 1815, when Napoleon was finally beaten by the Duke of Wellington at Waterloo, England was constantly at war. This war produced suffering and distress at home, as war always must; so the younger poets, Shelley in particular, seeing this distress, accused the government of tyranny, and even called Wordsworth and Coleridge, who had changed their views, traitors to the cause of liberty and of mankind. So Wordsworth assails Napoleon, in the sonnet *England and Switzerland, 1802;* and Shelley in turn laments the wrong and evil of his day, in the *Dirge;* and Scott and Campbell, less troubled by questions of right and wrong than the greater poets were, sing their soldier-songs and sea-songs, such as *The Rover* and *Ye Mariners of England;* and so each in his own way reflects a phase of this spirit of his time.

But of course war and democracy, and such wholly general matters, were not the only affairs of interest to the people of this period. Among other things, men were coming to take a new and much more inspiring view of nature—that is to say, of flowers, birds, mountains, rivers, and whatever is beautiful or picturesque in the out-of-doors. The poets of the earlier eighteenth century

had reflected the ideas of their day in considering such natural objects rather a bore. Pope, for instance, writing about 1730, is concerned only with the fashionable social life of London, or with abstract speculations on theological subjects, or with keen clever abuse of his neighbors. Gray, in the well-known *Elegy*, which was published in 1751, deals with a village churchyard; but he is not interested in the churchyard for its own sake, he does not note with pleasure the gray-white of the headstones upon the dusky green of the grass, or hear the birds chirping safely in the elms above it, as Wordsworth might; he uses it as a stage-setting for his own melancholy dreamings. Burns, in 1785–1786, writes of the daisy and the field-mouse, but even Burns is still thinking of beast and flower as symbols—the daisy is the humble country poet, the mouse is the poor well-meaning fellow for whom life is hard in spite of his own good intentions. When, however, we come to the nineteenth century, we find Wordsworth delighting in the cry of the cuckoo, and the rapid shift of light and shade upon the wings of a linnet singing in a bush; or Byron and Coleridge rejoicing in the grandeur of the mountains; or Shelley watching a cloud and describing it minutely in verse; or Keats searching till he finds the very words which shall most accurately reproduce the gait of a rabbit on a frosty day—"the hare *limped trembling* through the frozen grass." So throughout these poems we see revealing itself this new, exact, individual joy in observing and picturing bird and beast and meadow *as they are*, and for their own sakes.

Yet another pleasure of the time was in what we call the "supernatural"—in the mysterious feelings roused by the imagination when it dwells in the region outside reason. Fairy-stories and ghost-stories, to take the com-

monest examples, did not interest the eighteenth century much. But by the beginning of the nineteenth they had become popular, both in prose and in verse. One tale of a monk who sold himself to the devil, and finally met his death by falling from Satan's clutches seven miles upon a granite mountain, was so widely read that its author, Matthew Lewis, was universally called "Monk" Lewis, and is still so referred to in literary histories. This interest in the supernatural, like the interest in natural objects, runs through the poetry of the time; it is as well studied perhaps in *The Ancient Mariner* as anywhere. Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, too long for inclusion in a volume like this, is another example of its use. There is just a touch of it even in Wordsworth, at the end of the poem called *Lucy Gray*.

The whole period, if it may be summed up in a word, was one of enthusiasm. People were interested—interested in all sorts of ideas, and not ashamed to say so. The charm of scientific study was just becoming known, and botany and geology and chemistry and physics were engaging the attention of more and more Englishmen all the time. Travel was easier than it had been, and after the wars were over more folk stirred about, and wandered through Europe and their own country, getting out of the old home ruts. Life became, on the whole, a livelier matter in this particular quarter-century. And this liveliness, this new freshness of interest, is reflected in the immense number of lyric poems which were at this time produced.

And this statement leads to and partly answers the second question—What is a lyric? It is a poem which briefly and strongly expresses emotion of some kind. It is like a cry, or like laughter, or like a fit of the blues, or a sudden burst of hate, or the impulse to jump up and

cheer and keep on cheering when the home team makes a touch-down. It is often a real song; even when a lyric is not intended to be sung, it has always song-like qualities. Such poems as Wordsworth's *My Heart Leaps Up*, or Scott's *Coronach*, or Shelley's *Dirge* or *Indian Serenade* are true lyrics. Of such longer poems as *The Ancient Mariner* or Keats's *Eve of St. Agnes* one may say that they are not exactly lyrics, but lyric in their effect. They tell a story, which a true lyric does not do any more than a sudden shout of laughter tells a story; on the other hand, they are full of the most real and passionate emotion. All kinds of emotion are expressed in lyric form. There are lyrics of war and its delights, like *Hohenlinden* and *Ye Mariners of England* and the *Gathering Song of Donald Dhu* and the *Burial of Sir John Moore;* lyrics of gay love, like Moore's *The Young May Moon*, and sad love, like Shelley's *One Word is Too Often Profaned*, and light love, like Scott's *Rover*, and lost love, like Wordsworth's *She Dwelt Among Untrodden Ways;* lyrics of joy in nature, like Wordsworth's *To the Cuckoo*, and joy in life, like Cunningham's *A Wet Sheet and a Flowing Sea;* lyrics of grief, like Hood's *The Death Bed* and Keats's *Bright Star* and Lamb's *Hester*. To enumerate and classify lyrics, even the lyrics in this little book, would be to enumerate and classify all the emotions any one can feel. And because the emotions of this time, 1800 to 1825, ran strong and yet were easily stirred, whether by war or love or sunrise, the time was a lyric time in England; and no generation since, or possibly no generation that preceded, unless it may be Shakespeare's, has produced so many wonderful poems of this type.

II

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Life and Works

GREAT poets do not often lead adventurous lives, but at the same time they are not usually in spirit peaceful men. They are likely to be fine-grained, full of high ambition, tender-hearted—"loving all things great and small." They can be relied upon for sympathy and understanding. They will combat wrong wherever they see it. But at the same time because they are impulsive, they are easily excited. Sometimes they quarrel with their neighbors, or even with their wives. It was a great poet who was expelled from Oxford for defiantly refusing to obey the university regulations; another who was called the wickedest man of his time; a third, well known if not really great, whose life was said to be one long lawsuit, and who once, so the story goes, threw his cook bodily out of the window into the garden. If they were not emotional they could hardly write great poetry, and they do not always try to control their emotions; therefore the world calls them odd and queer.

William Wordsworth was at heart as fierce as any of them, but he kept his feeling under. He trained himself to peacefulness. His life was as quiet as a man's could be, more quiet than any other great poet's except perhaps Tennyson's. The proper material of poetry, he said once in a famous essay, is "emotion recollected in tranquillity," and because he lived for poetry he lived tranquilly. His life stretched over eighty years. When he was born, in 1770, George the Third was on the throne of England,

and the Declaration of Independence by the Colonies was not even thought of. He died in 1850, a subject of Queen Victoria, George the Third's great-grandniece, at a time when the rumblings of coming Civil War could already be heard underground in America. He was born before the secret of steam was discovered; when he died the railroad was an old story. Those years from 1770 to 1850 saw more radical changes in European experience and thought than probably any other period of the same length in European history; but Wordsworth passed them placidly in the country. He has proved to be of immense power in modern existence, but throughout most of his own life he was unheard of. One of the residents of his neighborhood, an intelligent gentleman, in 1818, when the poet was almost fifty and had done all his best work, asked a visitor whether it was true, as he had heard said, "that Mr. Wordsworth sometimes wrote poetry."

His life divides itself pretty clearly into three parts—the years from 1770 to 1798, which were years of preparation; from 1798 to 1814, in which, between twenty-eight and forty-four, nearly all his most effective writing was done; and the long stretch of forty years, the latter half of his life, in which he very slowly gained recognition and influence, although the ability to put his thoughts into supremely beautiful verse, as we can see now, had almost entirely left him. Why he lost that ability, no one can say. With few exceptions the great English poets began to write when they were very young, but most of them wrote nobly even to the end. It was so with Chaucer; it was so with Shakespeare; it was so with Tennyson; it was so with Browning. But with Wordsworth it was not so; and some have wondered whether the extreme monotony of his country habits, buried as he was beside the

Cumberland lakes, far away from the violence and passion of his times, did not deaden his emotions and petrify his powers.

Of what his life was like, as a boy and a young man, he has left a careful record in a long poem called *The Prelude*. The subtitle, more accurately descriptive, is "The growth of a poet's mind." In it he describes, in minute detail, and often beautifully, what he did and felt and thought while he was growing up and learning to appreciate his own weaknesses and his own strength. In those days there was much less interest than now in games; but Wordsworth, who was tall and strong, had a fondness for such outdoor exercises as walking, and particularly for any sports that kept him near the water—swimming, sailing, rowing, and skating, in the last of which he excelled everybody, being able to cut his own name upon the ice, a feat still notable even in that lake-strewn north-of-England country-side where everybody skated. He was fairly popular therefore as a boy, though, as he says, "of a moody and violent temper." He came of a good family, and though his father died poor, two uncles looked after his education by sending him to Cambridge. There he remained three years, from seventeen to almost twenty-one, taking his degree in January, 1791. In after years he felt that he had wasted his time at Cambridge, as men often do regret the way they spent their time in college; but he was not sorry he had gone there, as few men who go to college are. He read a great deal, wrote a little now and then, showed his impulsive disposition by going one vacation for a walking tour in the Alps (being oddly enough the very first undergraduate, so far as there is any record, who ever tried that amusement), and he studied at least enough to get his degree with decent credit.

Nowadays, at least in this country, he would have looked about for a business or profession. In fact he did consider the matter, and rather wished to be a soldier, but saw too little prospect of getting on to consider it. He had no talents for the law, shrank from the ministry, and was without capital to go into business. Even thus early his inclinations turned to poetry. With a very small allowance he lived in London for a short time; traveled in France; and finally in 1795, having received a legacy of £900 ($4,500) from a friend, settled down in Dorsetshire, with his sister Dorothy, to devote himself steadily to poetry. Nothing in this, so far, of excitement! But the rest of his days were to be passed even more simply. True, just before the close of the century he went abroad, spending a very cold winter in Goslar, a little German town, where he wrote some of his best poems. His sister accompanied him, a young woman of great charm and a fine mind, who devoted herself absolutely to her brother, and by her encouragement and sympathy did much to keep Wordsworth at his best. Her *Journal*, or daily account of their lives, is often as interesting as her brother's poetical description of the same experience.

Returning from Germany, in 1802, he married a Miss Mary Hutchinson, a friend of his sister's whom he had known a long time. They went to live in Cumberland, near the Scottish border, the country in which Wordsworth had been brought up. Here five children were born, of whom he was passionately fond, but who were, if his neighbors are to be believed, a little afraid, or, let us say, a little in awe of him. There was very little money, and less care for it, apparently. In twenty-five years, from 1795 to 1820, the sale of his verses brought him a sum which, if averaged, would come to almost precisely fifty

cents a week. Naturally the family did not live on this. At first there was the interest on his legacy; later he was given a fairly good position as distributor of revenue stamps for his county, a place he held until 1842, when he resigned it to his son. In that year, also, 1842, he was given an annual pension of £300 (about $1,500) and next year was made poet-laureate of England. No wonder, however, in the thirty years following the marriage, that Mrs. Wordsworth was known as a "manager." "She was a plain woman; she never gave you an inch on the butcher's bill," admiringly said, long afterwards, one of the tradesmen she had defeated. And while first Dorothy Wordsworth and afterwards the poet's wife looked after the household, and kept the accounts, and bullied the butcher and the baker, the poet continued steadily, serenely, on the path he had worked out for himself. As when a boy, so as a man he was a great walker. He knew every inch of the Cumberland neighborhood—the highways and the hillsides, every bend in the streams, every cove in the lakes, every rock on the mountain and every flower beside it. To sit down and write was, curiously enough in a professed literary man, painful to him; to handle a pen threw him into a cold sweat. So his custom was to compose half aloud to himself while walking, and then upon his return home to dictate to his sister or his wife the lines which he had thought of. As thus he went about muttering to himself, he was an object of considerable interest to his neighbors, the country farmers, and even of some terror to children. He was conscious of the strangeness of it, and for some years had a dog which he had trained to run before him and whenever they met any one to come back and give warning; upon which the poet would stop muttering his verses and walk on quietly until

the passer-by was out of hearing. But on the whole the country-side was proud of him. "He would start a bumming, and it was bum, bum, bum, stop; then bum, bum, bum again; his lips were always going the whole time he was on the walk." So one innkeeper described him years later; and another neighbor once said, when the poet had returned from a visit—"Well, there he is; we 're glad to hear him *booing* about again."

So one must think of Wordsworth, year after year, decade after decade, while the world moved on about him, kingdoms falling and new empires of knowledge opening everywhere, living his still and meditative life; breakfasting, and not seldom dining, upon oatmeal porridge; spending his days afoot, and in his evenings, as he has written, accustomed to sit

> "In the loved presence of his cottage-fire
> And listen to the flapping of the flame,
> Or kettle whispering its faint undersong."

He had always friends near him, that group among others including Coleridge, Southey (poet-laureate before Wordsworth; his poetry almost forgotten now) and De Quincey, the eloquent opium-eating dwarf; in his later years, too, as his reputation spread, his home became the goal of various pilgrims; but of the general life of England he knew little. It is odd to note, for instance, how little he was affected by his great fellow-poets, Byron, Shelley, and Keats, who were all much younger than he, but who had all done their work and passed away, years before he became famous. Byron he disliked; Shelley he ignored; Keats he met once but paid no attention to. In such an existence, so narrow and self-centered, there is nothing to stir our imagination, nothing to arouse a warmer

feeling than respect. Had Wordsworth lacked genius, his life would have been too dull to waste a thought on. But he had genius, genius that needed quiet for its growth, and so we can only be thankful that the opportunity for quiet was allowed him. He died in 1850, having outlived all his friends but De Quincey, all his children but two, and all his ignorant critics.

With such a man the history of his poetry is the only important history. What then were his ideas? How did he set them forth? Why has he been so unanimously called a *great* poet?

Wordsworth grew up in the latter part of the eighteenth century, just when men everywhere were re-discovering what had been for some time forgotten—that although society, that is to say mankind, must be governed by laws and rules, it is nevertheless made up of individuals, and its value as a whole depends upon the value of these individuals. The eighteenth century Englishman distrusted anything strikingly new or original. Fashion governed ideas and their expression, as well as clothes. Against this habit of the times, Burns, who was only eleven years older than Wordsworth, was in rebellion when he wrote *A Man's a Man for a' That.* Wordsworth's character was very different from that of Burns, but Wordsworth was like Burns in opposing the government of fashion in belief and fashion in expression. He had what he believed to be new ideas, and he determined to express them to suit himself, regardless of what the critics said were the rules of poetry. Poetry, Wordsworth thought, should be full of emotion, of feeling; and this feeling should be given in as simple language as the poet could possibly find. "A selection from the real language of men," he called it; by which he meant, not flat and dull words, but honest

words, words that really try to make clear exactly what the writer means. "Reddening Phœbus lifts his golden fire," the eighteenth century poets had written, meaning that *the sun rose;* and to this elaboration Wordsworth objected. As for the feeling to be expressed, it did not matter what aroused it, so long as the feeling itself was sympathetic, spontaneous, and powerful—a river might excite it, or the sight of a child, or a girl leaning on a gate in the Highlands, an overworked donkey, a peasant piling stones, a rainbow, daffodils, or sunrise over the city. Compare with the line quoted above, *Reddening Phœbus*, the stanza—

> "My heart leaps up when I behold
> A rainbow in the sky:
> So was it when my life began,
> So is it now I am a man;
> So be it when I shall grow old,
> Or let me die!"

This is as simple as the simplest prose—simple in its subject, simple in its form, simple in every word. But for all its simplicity, it is much more effective poetry than the hollow elaboration of *Reddening Phœbus*.

Time and again, it is true, Wordsworth carried his theories too far. He wrote of things which the people found ridiculous. His *Peter Bell* is an instance,—a long poem about a wicked tramp who is reformed by force of the example of his virtuous donkey. He was sometimes, in his determination to be simple, only very dull. He himself was a poor judge of his own work; and though his friends advised him, he found it hard to accept their advice; for the professed critics said that *all* his work was bad, and he knew in his heart this could not be so. Therefore he wrote what came into his head, good and bad; and as

long as he had his full powers, the good was equal to the best that had been written since Milton died, nearly a century and a half before.

His first work of real importance was published in 1798 (when he was twenty-eight years old), in a volume called *Lyrical Ballads*. Coleridge also contributed four poems to this volume; one of the four was *The Ancient Mariner*. Of Wordsworth's own poems, the best known was that usually called (in brief) *Tintern Abbey*. The *Lyrical Ballads* were reissued in 1800, with a preface containing his theories of poetry explained at length in prose. Seven years later Wordsworth published more poems, in two volumes; seven years later still, in 1814, a very long poem called *The Excursion*. From this time on to the end of his life, the poet published with increasing frequency; but after *The Excursion*, except in rare instances, he wrote nothing that added to his fame. The wonderful gift of melody was gone, the gift that makes the poet differ from the writer of verse—the inexplainable something that no effort of searching will secure, that is not only meter and vowel sounds and consonant sounds and meaning all combined, but something deeper still; the melody that can produce such lines as we find in *The Education of Nature*—

> "And beauty born of murmuring sound
> Shall pass into her face";

or in *The Solitary Reaper*—

> "Will no one tell me what she sings?—
> Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
> For old, unhappy, far-off things
> And battles long ago";

or in the *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*—

"Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence";

or in the sonnet *By the Sea*—

"The holy time is quiet as a nun
Breathless with adoration."

But if he wrote no more poetry that was truly magnificent, what of it? The immortality he believed in was his; he passed at length into the "eternal Silence," but his work remains as long, at least, as the English language endures.

III

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Life and Works

Tell the story of many a poet's life to a practical business man, who works ten hours a day in his office and provides honestly for his family, and he will say, "That is only a history of failure."

By the standards of every-day success, he will be right. Chatterton is called the "marvelous boy," but he committed suicide at nineteen. Shelley quarreled with his family, deserted his first wife, and died almost unknown. Wordsworth at the age of thirty-five was earning five hundred dollars a year. Tennyson was for ten years engaged to be married before, at forty-one, he had enough to support a wife. And Coleridge, whose greatest poem is perhaps the best known in the English language—Coleridge, of whom William Hazlitt once said, "He talks, and your only wish is that he should talk on forever"; Coleridge,

whom Wordsworth called "wonderful," Charles Lamb "inspired," and Carlyle "sublime"—Coleridge was, from the practical point of view, never anything but a conspicuous failure. He dropped out of college without taking his degree. He married, and left his wife and children to be supported by others. He started newspapers and saw them die upon his hands. He was a master-poet at the age of twenty-six; and by the time he was thirty he had dissipated all his poetical power. "His mind," wrote his friend Robert Southey to his friend William Wordsworth—"his mind is a perpetual St. Vitus Dance—eternal activity without action." If Coleridge had been a bad man in any way, this "waste of unequaled powers" could be more easily understood. But he was a good man—good like a child, though he had the mind of a giant. His defect was in his will power. His thoughts could not travel anywhere in a straight line. Even when he walked along a road, he was continually shifting from one side to the other, as aimlessly as a hen. So lacking in directive force, how immense must have been the gifts that enabled him to fascinate every one with whom he came in contact! Merchants paid his debts, his children adored him, his friends worked patiently to undo the mischief that his well-intentioned heedlessness brought about. When he was at Christ's Hospital in London, that famous charity school where the daily routine consisted of fat meat and a flogging, passers-by, we are told, stood "entranced in admiration" to hear him speak. Because he was in love, and could not pay his debts, he ran away from college and enlisted in a cavalry regiment—(he, who had never been on horseback!). But very soon an officer noticed his appearance, saw him writing Latin on the stable wall, and procured his discharge. In his old age the brightest young

men in England sat at his feet, listened spellbound while he talked for hours and hours, and called him prophet and seer. Of all the men of his time, it is Coleridge who has been most and best described by his contemporaries. And as we read of his dark and striking face, his flashing gray eyes, under heavy black eyebrows, his low, musical, penetrating voice, his eloquence, "borne on the gusts of genius," "launching upon his subject as an eagle mounts upon the wind," we are no longer surprised at the impression he made upon his generation; we are only amazed that all this genius ran to waste, sank into the ground like water, and left so little but muddiness behind. Yet here and there it was caught and turned into streams that beautified the world.

> "The tumult and the shouting dies,
> The captains and the kings depart,"—

the practical, successful men of affairs carry on their business and are buried and forgotten, but still the poet's name lives on, and the poet's work is a pleasure and an inspiration. After all is said, the fact remains that it was Coleridge who wrote *The Ancient Mariner*. More than a century has passed already since that unequaled poem was published. Many more will pass, and the English language will change entirely before the world is tired of reading it.

Coleridge was born in 1772, the youngest child of a large family. His father was a kindly, eccentric, learned parson, who had hard work to provide shelter and food for his children; Coleridge's mother was a competent, uneducated woman, who never really understood her son. Coleridge as a child was precocious, imaginative, fond of reading and bored by children's games. His education

was begun early at the boys' school in London called Christ's Hospital; later he went for a time to Cambridge, but never took a degree. After leaving the university in 1794, he determined to devote himself to literature, and he worked hard if unsteadily for three years. It was not until he came under the influence of Wordsworth, however, in 1797 and 1798, that his powers fully showed themselves.

The Ancient Mariner was thought out and written in the autumn of 1797. At that time Coleridge was living close by Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy. They planned a walking trip, and as they had very little money, the idea came to the two poets of writing something in collaboration, which they might sell to a magazine, and so pay their expenses. Coleridge had been telling of a dream of a friend of his about an old sailor whom ghosts had haunted and finally shipwrecked. Would this do for a subject? Wordsworth agreed, but suggested that if the sailor had committed some crime, there would be more reason in his being haunted. The day before in a book of "Voyages" he had been reading of the great veneration most seafaring men had for the bird called the albatross. Could not the crime of the sailor—"the old navigator" as Coleridge preferred to call him—be the killing of an albatross? With so much of the story in hand, they began composing. Very soon, however, Wordsworth saw that Coleridge was better able to work alone; and he limited his own contribution to a few lines.

> "And listens like a three-years child—
> The Mariner hath his will,"

is Wordsworth's; so is

> "And he was long and lank and brown
> As is the ribbed sea-sand."

All the rest of the poem is Coleridge's own. As he worked over the poem the scope of it grew larger; the poet abandoned the idea of printing it in a magazine, and began to think of making it the central poem of a book which should be made up of poetry by both authors, chiefly on supernatural subjects. The next spring, 1798, they actually did issue such a book. It was called *Lyrical Ballads; The Ancient Mariner and other Poems*. It made no stir whatever; hardly any one bought it but sailors, and they were deceived by the title, thinking it a volume of songs for use on shipboard. Very few copies of that first edition are still in existence and they are almost worth their weight in gold now. Besides *The Ancient Mariner*, the *Lyrical Ballads* contained only three little pieces by Coleridge, whereas Wordsworth contributed seventeen, one of them the splendid *Tintern Abbey*. Yet so magical and so complete has been the charm of *The Mariner*, that to Coleridge more than to Wordsworth the subsequent fame of the little book has been due.

Why is *The Ancient Mariner* so widely read and so much liked? Some poems are praised by the critics, like many of Wordsworth's, but for one reason or another never become popular. Others enjoy tremendous popularity, but because their form is weak or their feeling shallow, by and by the public tires of them, and they are forgotten. But here is a poem which every one, the critical and the uncritical alike, unite in praising. No two people will agree, perhaps, on the finest lyric in English, or the best sonnet, or the greatest ode or elegy; but they will agree that the English language knows no other ballad quite equal to *The Ancient Mariner*. Why?

Partly because the story is interesting; it would be interesting even told in prose. Partly because the pictures

are so sharply, clearly, vigorously painted—sunset in the tropics, the dead men working the ship, the icebergs, and the strange beings of the other world. Partly because there are really no weak spots in the poem anywhere; it is not only good, but all equally good, a very rare thing in poems of any length. Partly because the music, the melody of the whole poem is so simple that any one can appreciate it, yet so varied that no one can grow tired of it. All these things one may discover in this ballad; each generation discovers them, and welcomes them afresh.

Coleridge wrote *The Ancient Mariner* in 1797, when he was twenty-five, and published it in 1798, when he was twenty-six. Those two years were the best in Coleridge's life, the "wonderful years," as they have been called. He was married and still in love; his acquaintance with Wordsworth was bringing out all the strength of his poetical powers; and he had not yet fallen into the habit that subsequently helped to destroy his chances of success. In 1797 and 1798 he wrote all but two of the poems that have since been called great. Two of these poems have interesting histories. One, *Kubla Khan*, he dreamed, and afterwards wrote down from memory just as he had dreamed it; only unfortunately while he was writing it down a visitor interrupted him, and when the visitor had gone the poet could not remember any more of the poem. The other poem, *Christabel*, is in a way still more odd. It was written in a meter that had never before, Coleridge thought, been used. Most of the poem was written in 1797, but it was not published anywhere for nineteen years. Meanwhile various people read it in manuscript, and thought it very remarkable. Sir Walter Scott, among others, knew of it; and Coleridge always believed and declared that Scott took from *Christabel* the meter of the *Lady of the Lake*, *The Lay*

of the Last Minstrel, and the rest of the poems that made Scott famous. However this may be, it is at least a fact that Coleridge used this now well-known measure before Scott did. *Christabel* is a fine poem, but it has never shared the popularity of *The Ancient Mariner*, partly because it tells a less interesting story, and partly because it was never finished.

Why was it never finished? Why did Coleridge, though he lived more than thirty-five years longer, write no more great poetry? The reason, like most reasons for failure, is complicated. Part of it lay in the man's nature, part in his bad health. He had always been visionary, unpractical, queer. Now, with a family to support, and nothing to live on, he worried himself sick. He got fearful dyspepsia from bad food at irregular hours; he took no care of himself, and neuralgia attacked him. To ease the pain, he began, just about the beginning of the century, to take opium. From this time on his chance of development was ended. He did not become such a slave to poison as De Quincey was, who used to take sometimes more than a quart of laudanum a day. Coleridge indeed, toward the close of his life, conquered the habit, but not until it had spoiled his manhood. He tried this and that, made a little money as a dramatist, as a journalist, as a critic, but gave it all up finally and was content to let his good friends take care of him, as they were proud to do. There is a certain resemblance between Coleridge and Wordsworth in this early end of their poetical ability. Both wrote little or nothing of poetical value in the last thirty-odd years of their lives. But the failure of Coleridge is much more striking than Wordsworth's. Wordsworth at all events did a strong man's work; Coleridge had only one brilliant year and a half, and that at twenty-five!

Yet to call the author of *The Ancient Mariner* a failure would be absurd. One of the poet's immediate descendants—his great-nephew—became Lord Chief Justice of England, the highest legal officer in the land. He was a very able man, with a fine mind; he did great good; he earned more money in a year twice over than the poet in all his days; he "sat before kings," as the Bible says. But what is the Lord Chief Justice's fame, what did he do for the world, compared with his great-uncle, who had so sad a life, but yet who wrote *The Ancient Mariner?* In the answer to that question lies the justification of the poet.

IV

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Life and Works

In the sketch of Wordsworth's life and poetry, it was said that because he was in opposition to the general ideas of England about poetry, very few Englishmen of his own day cared to read what he wrote. Percy Bysshe Shelley, who was born in 1792, when Wordsworth had just left Cambridge, and who died in 1822, when Wordsworth had still almost thirty years to live—was in violent opposition not only to English ideas of what was right in poetry, but to English ideas of what was right in life. In consequence, Englishmen not only were indifferent to what he wrote, but also disliked what he did. His father quarreled bitterly with him; the Oxford authorities expelled him from the University; the law took away his children from him, and refused even to let him see them, on the ground

that he was not fit to associate with them; and finally public opinion drove him from the country, and forced him to live and die abroad. Does it not all sound as if Shelley were a criminal, or at least a very evil-hearted man? He was not. He was perhaps nearer right about most things than his country was. He was as honorable and pure-minded as any one in England; as honorable and pure-minded as the Chief Justice who refused him the right to see his own children. Yet one can hardly blame the people of his time for thinking of him and doing to him as they did. They wanted to stand still; he wanted to push ahead. He did impatient and violent things, such as trying to stir up Ireland to rebellion, and he said things still more violent—things foolish, absurd, sensational, bad. He was as obstinate as only an honest, strongly emotional man can be. He refused to make any concessions to what other people thought right. So what could his neighbors do but quarrel with him, and finally drive him out? We, nowadays, can see how honest he was, how clean-minded, how generous, above all, how great a poet; they could see him only as a rebellious, disobedient, abusive, inconstant boy, a dangerous citizen, and a writer of vague verses, advocating strange theories, and impossible to understand. It must be remembered that nearly all the poetry for which we now call Shelley great was written after he had been practically exiled; it was published in an obscure fashion; and it came, therefore, to the notice of very few people. On the whole, famous as Shelley has now become, it is hard to see how England could have treated him in any other way than it did.

Shelley came of higher rank than either Wordsworth or Coleridge. His father was a knight, Sir Timothy Shelley. The son was sent to Eton, a school for the sons of rich men

and noblemen, where he distinguished himself by refusing to "fag." Fagging meant running errands and doing odd jobs for boys higher up in the school. It had been the custom for centuries. When Shelley refused to fag, the older boys thrashed him, but in vain. He would cry, but he would not fag. So they called him "mad Shelley" and gave him up in disgust. He never became popular at Eton, but before he left he had defied the teachers as he had defied the pupils, and so had gained some notoriety at least.

At Oxford he had more freedom than at Eton. He spent his time in reading Greek and philosophy, making wild experiments in chemistry (then a much less known science than now; it was not taught at Oxford, nor anywhere else in England), taking long cross-country walks, and writing novels and poetry. He and a young man named Thomas Jefferson Hogg, who subsequently wrote his biography, lived together an odd and secluded life. They saw a great deal of each other and almost nothing of any one else. They met at one o'clock each day and read or talked until six, at which time Shelley usually went to sleep on the rug, with his "little round head" close up to the fire. At ten o'clock he woke, and the friends talked or read again until two in the morning or later. He took his meals irregularly, often forgetting to eat anything at all. Of Shelley's appearance, and the appearance of his room, Hogg has left excellent descriptions.

"His figure was slight and fragile, and yet his bones and joints were large and strong. . . . His clothes were expensive and fashionable; but they were tumbled, rumpled, unbrushed. . . . His complexion was delicate and almost feminine, of the purest red and white; yet he was tanned and freckled by exposure to the sun. . . . His features,

his whole face, and particularly his head, were, in fact, unusually small; yet the last *appeared* of a remarkable bulk, for his hair was long and bushy, and . . . he often rubbed it fiercely with his hands, or passed his fingers through his locks unconsciously, so that it was singularly wild and rough. . . . His features . . . breathed an animation, a fire, an enthusiasm, a vivid and preternatural intelligence, that I never met with in any other countenance. . . . But . . . the voice . . . was excruciating; it was intolerably shrill, harsh, and discordant." Such was the poet at eighteen; such he remained except that his harsh voice softened greatly. As for his room—"Books, boots, papers, shoes, philosophical instruments, clothes, pistols, linen, crockery, ammunition, and phials innumerable, with money, stockings, prints, crucibles, bags and boxes, were scattered on the floor and in every place. . . . The tables, and especially the carpet, were already stained with large spots of various hues. . . . An electrical machine, an air-pump, a galvanic trough, a solar microscope, and large glass jars and receivers, were conspicuous. . . . Upon the table by his side were some books, lying open, several letters, a bundle of new pens, and a bottle of . . . ink, . . . a piece of deal, lately part of the lid of a box . . . and a handsome razor that had been used as a knife. There were bottles of sodawater, sugar, pieces of lemon, and the traces of an effervescent beverage. Two piles of books supported the tongs, and these upheld a small glass retort above an Argand lamp. I had not been seated many minutes before the liquor in the retort boiled over, adding fresh stains to the table, and rising in fumes with a most disagreeable odor. Shelley snatched the glass quickly, and dashing it in pieces among the ashes under the grate, increased the unpleasant and disagreeable effluvium."

Shelley, as has been said, did not remain at Oxford long. Before he left, however, he and Hogg played a practical joke on the Oxford scholars that is still remembered. Shelley wrote some wild verses, which the two friends published under the title of *Posthumous Fragments of Margaret Nicholson*. Margaret Nicholson was a crazy woman who had attempted to assassinate King George, and had been put in an asylum. But the poems attributed to her were gravely received and widely read at the University. It was shortly after this that Shelley came into conflict with the University authorities. He had had printed and circulated a pamphlet attacking some of the doctrines of Christianity. As Oxford was one of the two strongholds of religious education in England, the faculty objected to this action and called Shelley to account. His attitude was defiant; so was that of Hogg, his friend, who was also mixed up in the affair; and in the end they were both expelled.

After his expulsion from Oxford Shelley went up to London, and presently, to every one's astonishment, eloped and married. The girl was called Harriet Westbrook; she was only sixteen, a small, blonde, pretty girl, madly in love with Shelley, but not otherwise very interesting. Their married life was a series of disastrous attempts at housekeeping—in Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and England, wherever an impulsive fancy led them. After a few years they found life together intolerable; they separated by mutual consent, and the poor young woman subsequently committed suicide. The whole story of this marriage is obscure; but though Shelley was undoubtedly foolish and impractical throughout, there seems no reason to believe that he was any more to blame than she was.

Her tragic death, however, was a great factor in turn-

ing public opinion against Shelley. He had already published a good deal of poetry that was undeniably intended to show his hatred and contempt for the ordinary religion and government of his own day—poetry the wildness of which is only to be excused by its own brilliance and the poet's youth. And besides, he had again eloped, this time with Mary Godwin, another sixteen year old girl, daughter of a philosopher and novelist well known in those days, though now forgotten. It was at this time that he was denied the right to bring up or even to see the children of his first marriage. Soon after, in anger and disgust with England, he fled abroad, and never afterwards returned.

Practically all his great poetry was written in the next five years. He wandered over Italy, stopping here and there, in Florence, Rome, or Pisa, as his fancy chose, for weeks or months at a time. He met Byron, whose fame as a poet was at that time far greater than Shelley's own; in fact Shelley himself firmly believed Byron to be much the abler man; but the two poets had an excellent influence on each other, Byron learning grace from Shelley, and Shelley perhaps clearness from Byron. At first he was in bad health; later, however, he grew stronger than he had ever been. Most of the time he was happy in spite of his exile, and even in spite of the death of the two children of his second marriage. He was wedded to a woman who passionately loved him and who brought out the best that was in him; he was surrounded by few, but those very dear, friends—and above all he was conscious of being able to do better and nobler work every year. He wrote constantly, sometimes very rapidly—seven or eight long poems, many lyrics, and even a play, which has been called by many critics the finest poetic drama in English

since Shakespeare. His verses gradually lost their wildness and vagueness, and became at the same time more musical and easier to understand. Perhaps the best known of all, the *Adonais*, was written the year before Shelley died. It is an elegy, or lament upon the death of John Keats, his fellow-poet. Little if any poetry of the sort has ever surpassed it.

The last stanza of the *Adonais* is as follows:

> "The breath whose might I have invoked in song
> Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven
> Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng
> Whose sails were never to the tempest given.
> The massy earth and spherèd skies are riven!
> I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar!
> Whilst, burning through the inmost veil of heaven,
> The soul of Adonais, like a star,
> Beacons from the abode where the eternal are."

To call this a prophecy of Shelley's own death would be absurd. Yet in the light of what happened the lines have a strange interest. In the spring and summer of 1822, Shelley was living on the Gulf of Spezzia on the coast of Italy. Hearing that a friend from England, Leigh Hunt, had arrived at Leghorn, fifty miles away, Shelley and a young friend named Williams sailed over to see him. They spent a week at Leghorn, and on July 8, 1822, set out for home. The weather for weeks had been dry and fine; but hardly had they left port when a sudden storm drove down from the hills. A watcher in the lighthouse on shore counted seven sails before the storm struck; half an hour later, when the sun came out again, he saw only six. Shelley's vessel had gone down. Afterwards divers found her sunk so quietly in sixty feet of water that not even the cushions of the seats were gone. More than a week

later the bodies of both Shelley and Williams were cast on shore miles away. By order of the government both were burned; but Shelley's ashes and his heart were saved, and buried in the little Roman cemetery near to Keats.

Concerning many of Shelley's longer poems there is much dispute. They are rightly called vague, obscure; they have been thought, in their passionate protest against society and the accepted order of things, very wrong. But a hundred years has helped them; what in its own day was wild seems less wild now, and their beauty has not dulled. As for the lyrics, each successive generation has united to praise them. *The Skylark*, the *Ode to the West Wind*, *The Cloud*, and many others, have a music magical, a delicacy almost supernatural, a feeling as strong as it is pure. They sound not as if a man had written them, but as if a bird had sung them. "Ethereal spirit, pilgrim of the sky!"—so Wordsworth described the skylark, and it is Shelley's best description.

The material of these lyrics, it may be noted, is almost all tinged with melancholy. In such a poem, for example, as *The Indian Serenade*, where the lover is addressing his mistress, and where we might expect therefore a certain happiness to express itself—even there, melancholy reigns. The *Stanzas Written in Dejection* are among the saddest in English poetry; the *Dirge* is as mournful as the cry of a lost child; even *The Cloud* and *The Skylark* have an undercurrent of depression. The fact is, Shelley was too finely strung ever to be happy. He saw, as we all see, that this world is full of suffering—men, women, and little children dying of hunger all around us, and sinking into wretchedness of spirit worse than death. He saw it, as we all see it; but most of us can forget it in other interests,

and Shelley could never forget it. So his most beautiful songs are sad songs. For gaiety, for lightness of spirit, we most turn to Scott, to Moore, to Keats even. But for sheer and sincere pathos, unblunted by sentimentality, these shorter verses of Shelley stand supreme.

V

JOHN KEATS

Life and Works

John Keats, latest born of the group of poets that distinguished the early years of the nineteenth century, died so young that he may be said hardly to have had a history. He lived less than twenty-six years. It is interesting to compare his career with that of Thomas Carlyle, who was born in the same year with Keats, 1795. Carlyle, by 1860, was perhaps the most famous person in the English literature of his day; even now he would probably be voted by most critics the ablest prose writer of his century. Yet if Carlyle had died when Keats died, in 1821, he would have died unknown. We should not have had even a paragraph in the biographical dictionaries to tell us that he once existed. His only epitaph, his only monument would have been a line on some crude headstone in a forgotten Scottish cemetery. Of course writers of prose do as a rule develop later than poets do. But if Wordsworth had died at twenty-five, or Coleridge, or Scott, or Tennyson, or Browning, the world to-day would remember nothing of them. Shelley was drowned at thirty; but he did all his great work in his last five years. Byron per-

ished in the swamps of Missolonghi at thirty-six, but at twenty-five Byron was still a passionate boy, with little or nothing written that hinted definitely of immortality. Perhaps no other writer of English ever achieved such poetic triumph in his first quarter century as Keats did. His early death was for this reason one of the most mournful things that the history of English poetry has known.

Keats was a cockney. He was born over a stable in London, of an undistinguished though not a poverty-stricken family. It is said that like many other Londoners of his rank he had difficulty in pronouncing his *h's* correctly. He was from the first a boy of a strong temper, with a love of fighting that amounted to a passion,—a short, broad-shouldered, fiery lad, quick to resent and quick to forgive. All his short life he was on terms of the closest intimacy with his two younger brothers—George, born two years after John, but bigger and more powerful, and Tom, two years younger still, a frail boy who died of consumption at eighteen. But George Keats has said of John—"we fought fiercely . . . we loved, jangled and fought alternately." Another schoolmate wrote: "Keats . . . would fight anyone—morning, noon and night. It was meat and drink to him." In 1818, Keats himself writes—"went to the theater here the other night . . . and got insulted, which I ought to remember to forget to tell anybody; for I did not fight and as yet have had no redress." About the same time he discovered a stalwart young butcher tormenting a cat, and in a stand-up fight, by rounds, thrashed him soundly. But the testimony to his pugnacity is far exceeded in amount by the evidence of his charm. "The generosity and daring of his character, with the extreme beauty and animation of his face . . . captivated the boys." "He was not

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merely the favorite of all, like a pet prize fighter, for his terrier courage; but his high-mindedness, his utter unconsciousness of a mean motive, his placability, his generosity, wrought so general a feeling in his behalf that I never heard a word of disapproval from anyone, superior or equal, who had known him." When his mother lay dying of consumption the boy of fifteen "would suffer nobody to give her medicine, or even cook her food, but himself." When the younger brother developed the same disease, it was John who nursed, guarded, and encouraged him as long as the boy lived, and who alone was with him as he died. A few months before John Keats himself died, he wrote to a friend concerning Miss Fanny Brawne, the girl he loved—"The thought of leaving Miss Brawne is above everything horrible—the sense of darkness coming over me. . . . I can bear to die, I cannot bear to leave her. . . . Everything I have in my trunks that reminds me of her goes through me like a spear. . . . There is nothing in the world of sufficient interest to divert me from her a moment. O that I could be buried near where she lives!" A man who could love so and fight so, had it is plain the emotions of a poet.

But what of the training that is as essential as emotion to the production of poetry? That training Keats had, too. In fact, the careful education of all great English poets (except Shakespeare) is one of the most noticeable things about them. Poetry is the expression of deep feeling, but such expression to be effective must be disciplined. From the time he was fourteen Keats read voraciously—he even read at his meals when he was a schoolboy, eating "from beyond a book." History, philosophy, science, he read whatever came his way; the Greek and Latin classics also he devoured, the Latin in the original,

the Greek in translation. His favorites always, however, were poetry and romance. After he left school he was advised by his guardians to study medicine, and in the old-fashioned way he first served as office-boy and general helper to a physician, and later "walked the hospitals" in London—that is, acted as interne. His fellow-students, who knew his passion for reading and versifying, and the many nights he spent in the study of other than medical works, were surprised when at the end he stood high in his examinations and was licensed as a surgeon. He performed various operations creditably; but his dreams and longings invaded the operating-room and terrified him with the fear that he might at some critical moment become careless. Perhaps of all men a doctor can least afford to think of anything except his work. So Keats deliberately turned his back on surgery. "My last operation," he said to a friend, "was the opening of a man's temporal artery. I did it with the utmost nicety, but reflecting on what passed through my mind at the time, my dexterity seemed a miracle and I never took up the lancet again." He was hardly twenty-one. He had been already a poet in heart and aspiration for five or six years. Now he turned to poetry as a profession, and in the next three years achieved undying fame.

Of course he had for some time been writing and circulating verses in manuscript among his friends, of whom he had many. The dearest to Keats at this time was Charles Cowden Clarke, son of his old schoolmaster. The best known to us were Shelley (with whom Keats was on friendly terms, though never intimate, or able to forget the difference in their rank), and Leigh Hunt, a handsome, black-haired, light-hearted improvident young man, a third rate poet and essayist, but a first rate critic, who is

now remembered chiefly for the greater men who knew and liked him, and on whose work and life he exercised a strange influence. Hunt had been prosecuted, and imprisoned for two years, for no other offense than telling the truth in a newspaper he conducted, about the Prince of Wales. The result was that many of the young men of the time, haters of tyranny and lovers of free speech, were attracted to Hunt and made friends with him. Keats met Hunt at the critical time when surgery was beginning to prove itself an unsafe trade for a born poet. Hunt read the young doctor's verses and encouraged him heartily to go on writing, and published for him his first printed poem. They read together, wrote sonnets (in a kind of friendly competition) on the same subjects, and became known to the other literary men of the day as intimates.

Keats's first volume of poems was brought out in 1817. Like the *Lyrical Ballads* of nineteen years before, it fell flat. But no one knew better than Keats himself that it was faulty. "As to what you say about my being a poet, I can return no answer but by saying that the high idea I have of poetical fame makes me think I see it towering too high above me. At any rate I have no right to talk until *Endymion* is finished." *Endymion* was the long poem upon which he immediately set to work after his first volume appeared. He wrote with the greatest steadiness. "He sat down to his task, which was about fifty lines a day, with his paper before him, and wrote with as much regularity and apparent ease as he wrote his letters." He tells a friend, "I find I cannot exist without Poetry—without eternal Poetry; I began with a little, but habit has made me a leviathan. I had become all in a tremble from not having written anything of late; the sonnet overleaf did me good; I slept the better last night

for it; this morning, however, I am nearly as bad again." Yet when *Endymion* was published, Keats said in the preface that the poem contained "great inexperience, immaturity, and every error denoting a feverish attempt rather than a deed accomplished. . . . It is just that this youngster should die away; a sad thought for me, if I had not some hope that while it is dwindling I may be plotting and fitting myself for verses fit to live." Such words, though modest, indicate, however, no despondency. Keats was confident, at this time, of his own powers. "I think," he said, "I shall be among the English poets when I die." He was right. But he might well have despaired if he had known how soon that death was coming.

Endymion, like the shorter poems, made no sensation. It gave a chance, however, for the publication in a magazine called the *Quarterly Review* of a criticism so harsh and brutal that for years the legend was that it had "killed Keats." Byron wrote in *Don Juan*,

> "John Keats, who was killed off by one critique,
> Just as he really promised something great . . .
> Poor fellow, his was an untoward fate;
> 'Tis strange the mind, that very fiery particle.
> Should let itself be snuffed out by an article."

And Shelley based on this idea his elegy on Keats, *Adonais*, the most splendidly colored of all Shelley's vivid poems. We know now, since the publication of Keats's letters, how little the review really affected him. "The attempt to crush me in the *Quarterly* has only brought me more into notice, and it is a common expression among bookmen, 'I wonder the *Quarterly* should cut its own throat.'" The real reason for the savageness of the review (which called the poet contemptuously "Johnny Keats," and or-

dered him "back to the shop, Mr. John, stick to plasters, pills," etc.) was not the badness of *Endymion*, but the fact that Leigh Hunt and Keats were friends. For the *Quarterly* was as much a political paper as a literary; it hated Hunt's opinions, and therefore it abused his friends. The review was brutal, the man who wrote it was a cad, but since it indirectly inspired *Adonais*, who can regret it now?

This review appeared in September, 1818. What gave rise to the story that it killed Keats was the undoubted fact that after that autumn of 1818 Keats's health failed steadily. He had spent part of the summer in a walking-tour in Scotland, roughing it in the rain. The exposure was too much for him; it stirred in him the seeds of consumption, of which his mother had already died and his brother Tom was dying. Close attendance on this brother all through the early winter of that year, made matters worse. "I live now," he wrote, "in a continual fever. It must be poisonous to life." Tom's death saddened while it made Keats's days easier. The torture of a passionate love affair with Miss Brawne began, too, about this time—torture, because almost no sooner had he learned the strength of his feeling for her, than, medically trained as he was, he suspected also that he was doomed. His final confession to himself of the truth we have in the words of his friend Charles Brown:

"One night . . . he came into the house in a state that . . . was fearful. He . . . instantly yielded to my request that he should go to bed. I followed with the best immediate remedy in my power. . . . Before his head was on the pillow, he slightly coughed, and I heard him say, 'That is blood from my mouth.' I went towards him; he was examining a single drop of blood upon the

sheet. 'Bring me the candle, Brown, and let me see this blood.' After regarding it steadfastly he looked up in my face with a calmness of countenance that I can never forget, and said, 'I know the color of that blood—it is arterial blood—I cannot be deceived in that color—that drop of blood is my death warrant—I must die!'" This was in February, 1820; and a year later, February, 1821, he was dead.

The history of that last year is all of misery. The disease grew quickly worse. He could do no work, except to revise the proofs of his last volume of poems, which was published in July, 1820; he spent his days "lying on a white bed, with white quilt and white sheets; the only color . . . the hectic flush of his cheeks." In September, as a last desperate chance, he sailed for Italy; after a few weeks in Naples, drove the two hundred miles to Rome, and there settled down to die. "I feel the flowers growing over me," he said, and he used to ask the doctor, "When will this posthumous life of mine come to an end?" It ended February 23, 1821. His friend Joseph Severn was with him all the while. They were almost the same age. It is strange to remember that Severn died also in Rome, *fifty-eight* years later! The house in which Keats died was recently bought by an association of English and American lovers of poetry, and is now kept up as a memorial of the poet, and of Shelley. The two, who died within eighteen months of each other, are buried in the English cemetery at Rome—"a light of laughing flowers above their graves is spread."

Compared with the amount of poetry that Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Tennyson, or Browning wrote, Keats's total production is very slight. It may all be put into one small volume. But even one or two poems, as in Gray's

case, are sometimes sufficient to ensure fame, and Keats wrote enough to make the wonderful nature of his powers clear. The longest poem, *Endymion*, though it contains many beautiful passages, he was right in thinking immature. The next longest, *Hyperion*, he never finished. Other extended efforts, *Isabella* and *Lamia*, are well known, but not quite of the first rank. His finest achievements were *The Eve of St. Agnes*, half a dozen splendid sonnets, the little ballad called *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, and the famous group of odes—to *Autumn*, to *Indolence*, to *Melancholy*, to a *Nightingale*, and on a *Grecian Urn*. For vividness of color, beauty of figure, and witchery of melody, it would be hard if not impossible to find any lines in English poetry to equal his. "The silver snarling trumpets 'gan to chide," "And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep," "Its little smoke in pallid moonshine died," "From silken Samarcand to cedared Lebanon," "Beaded bubbles winking at the brim," "Forever wilt thou love and she be fair"—there is about all these, whether elaborately worked like the first or simplified almost to monosyllables like the last, a marvelous fascination to the ear—a fascination that rises to its greatest height, perhaps, in two lines from the *Ode to a Nightingale*—

> "Charm'd magic casements opening on the foam
> Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn."

Critics have called Keats's poetry "sensuous," that is, concerned with things that delight the senses, like odors and flavors and sounds, rather than with what delights the mind and the spirit. Some of it is sensuous, frankly so. Keats was attracted by physical sensations. The story goes, for instance, that on one occasion he covered

his tongue with cayenne pepper, to thrill with the fiery torment of the smart. His imagination played with rich colors and poignant perfumes and sweet sounds. But if such had been his only material, his work must have died. He goes far beyond physical sensations in such lines as these from the *Grecian Urn:*—

> "Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
> As doth eternity! Cold Pastoral!
> When old age shall this generation waste
> Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
> Than ours, a friend to man";

or these again from the *Nightingale:*—

> "Quite forget
> What thou among the leaves hast never known,
> The weariness, the fever and the fret
> Here, where men sit and hear each other groan."

His one attempt at the ballad form, *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, is as striking a success in its simplicity as the Odes are in their richness. It is hardly a story, rather a picture of a knight whom love has enchanted to his ruin. It may be that while he was writing it Keats was thinking of his own wild passion and the beginning of his own sad end. At all events the poem equals anything of Coleridge on Coleridge's own ground—the supernatural.

What heights would Keats have reached had his strength not failed him? No one can tell, of course. He might have thrown away his powers like Coleridge, or lost the gift of melody, like Wordsworth; but this it is hard to believe. The faults of his poetry are boyish faults, faults of judgment and taste, faults which it seems likely he would have altogether outgrown. The charm of it is in spite of these things. Shakespeare as a young poet had

precisely the same faults. At his best, and free from these faults, Keats showed a splendor of picture-making imagination far more striking than Shakespeare or Milton possessed at twenty-five. Had he lived to be as old as they, he might perhaps have become the greatest poet in the English language.

VI

THE LESSER POETS

Biographical Sketches

Sketches have been already given of the four early nineteenth century poets who are commonly called the greatest of their time. But, as is always true, the great poets were not the only ones who wrote beautiful poetry; many others occasionally rose to splendid verse. A little of this verse, either for its own sake alone, or because it is well known, has been added here. A word or two about its writers will be in place.

Sir Walter Scott (1772–1832) was the most famous of the lesser poets. In fact, in his own day, he was far more famous than any of the four who have already been discussed. His poetry, romantic, picturesque, and full of adventure, suited nearly everybody, though Scott said himself, half-seriously, that boys and soldiers were particularly fond of it. There is a story which illustrates his point. In 1808, when the English were fighting Napoleon in Spain, a company of soldiers was lying partly exposed under fire. To keep the men steady one of the officers read aloud the story of the battle from *The Lady of the*

Lake, then a new work; and the soldiers lay still, only now and then interrupting the reader with cheers.

Scott was born in Edinburgh in 1772. He studied law, but was chiefly interested in history and the Scottish legends. He began his real career as a poet when he was about thirty-five years old, and went on with it ten years. Then he left verse-making and turned to novel-writing, which he kept up constantly for the rest of his life. For his services to literature he was made a baronet in 1820. Out of both his poems and his novels he made a great deal of money; but he became involved in the bankruptcy of a firm of publishers, which left him $400,000 in debt. The debt he paid off finally, but the struggle wore him out and killed him. Scott was one of the most friendly, generous, loyal men who ever wrote English, and in his own time he was perhaps of all authors the best-loved.

Thomas Campbell (1777–1844), Thomas Moore (1779–1852) and Thomas Hood (1799–1845) were also men of reputation in their own day, though of nothing like the popularity of Scott. Campbell is remembered for his patriotic and martial verse—*Ye Mariners of England* is a famous national song. Moore was an Irishman, a true song-writer; many of his poems, such as *Oft in the Stilly Night, The Last Rose of Summer,* and *The Harp that Once Through Tara's Halls* are best known with their musical settings. His longest poem, very popular in its own day, is *Lalla Rookh.* Hood was chiefly a humorist—a man something like, in spirit, our own Oliver Wendell Holmes, never too comical to be unsympathetic.

Charles Lamb (1775–1834) was the most brilliant essayist of his day. He is better known for his prose than for his poetry. Adopting the nom de plume of "Elia," he wrote scores of papers, intimate and whimsical, which

have as much charm for the ordinary reader now, as they had a hundred years ago. Of the poems given here *The Old Familiar Faces* is perhaps the only one, however (though he wrote many), which is still widely read.

Allan Cunningham (1784–1842) was a Scotchman, a poet and prose-writer, who did a great deal of magazine work, but like Wolfe is famous for one poem, the song here given.

Rev. Charles Wolfe (1791–1823) is also a poet of a single production, *The Burial of Sir John Moore*. Not great poetry, it has something about it nevertheless, quick, pathetic, and simple, which has kept it fresh in every one's memory. Sir John Moore, an English general, was killed in 1809, while leading the English against the French, near Corunna, in Spain. His death stirred up some feeling in England, because he was thought to have been sacrificed to government policy. Seven years later, Charles Wolfe, a young Irish clergyman, happening to read an account of Moore's death, scribbled off the famous lines in a friend's room. Later, when they were published, they were at first attributed to Byron, who declared that "he wished he *had* done them." Others since then have claimed the honor of their authorship, but there is no doubt that they belong to Wolfe.

DESCRIPTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY

WORDSWORTH

The most satisfactory edition of the poetical works of Wordsworth, for the ordinary reader, is that published in one volume by the Macmillan Company. A much larger and complete edition is that of W. Knight, in eight volumes. Knight's *William Wordsworth*, in three volumes, is also the standard biography. But the short life of Wordsworth by F. W. H. Myers in the *English Men of Letters Series* is excellent. An admirable criticism without biographical details is Raleigh's *Wordsworth*. Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal*, and Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, chaps. IV, V, XIV, XVII, XIX, XX, and XXII, are of great interest, the first in the light it throws on Wordsworth's own experience, the second as explanatory of his theory of poetic material and diction. Perhaps the best essays on Wordsworth are those of Matthew Arnold (*Essays in Criticism, Second Series*); Sir Leslie Stephen (*Hours in a Library*, vol. I); and Walter Bagehot (*Wordsworth, Tennyson* and *Browning; Literary Studies*, vol. II). Two poems addressed to Wordsworth (Watson: *Wordsworth's Grave;* and Shelley: *Sonnet to Wordsworth*) are interesting.

COLERIDGE

The *Globe* edition (Macmillan) of Coleridge's poems, in one volume, is the most convenient. Campbell's life (*Samuel Taylor Coleridge: a Narrative of the Events of his Life*) is the fullest biography. H. D. Traill's *Coleridge*, in the *English Men of Letters*, is not extremely successful, but is compact and

simple. Admirable sketches of the poet are to be found by Coleridge himself (*Biographia Literaria*, chap. X), by Hazlitt (*My First Acquaintance with Poets*) and by Carlyle (*Life of Sterling*, chap. V). Lamb's essay (*Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago*) should be read if possible. Essays by Walter Pater (in *Appreciations*), by J. R. Lowell, and by Swinburne (in *Essays and Studies*) are the best among a multitude.

SHELLEY

Of the works of Shelley, the most convenient editions are the *Globe* (Macmillan Company, 1 vol.) and the *Cambridge* (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1 vol.). The standard large edition is that of H. B. Forman, in eight volumes, with complete variorum readings. The standard biography is by Edward Dowden, *Life of Shelley*. Shorter but more agreeable is J. A. Symonds' *Shelley* in *English Men of Letters*. The personal recollections of T. J. Hogg (*Life of Shelley*) and of E. J. Trelawney (*Recollections of Shelley and Byron*) are more vivid and human than the later works. *The Real Shelley* by J. C. Jeaffreson is savage and untrustworthy, but expresses a point of view held by many. Among the critical essays upon Shelley the most readable are Bagehot's (in *Literary Studies*), Andrew Lang's (in *Letters to Dead Authors*), Matthew Arnold's (in *Essays in Criticism, Second Series*) and G. E. Woodberry's (in *Makers of Literature*). Robert Browning has also an essay on Shelley valuable as a study of one great poet by another.

KEATS

The best edition of Keats's works is by H. B. Forman, in four volumes. The *Globe* edition is the best in one volume. Two good brief biographies are those of Colvin (*English Men of Letters*) and William Rossetti (*Great Writers' Series*). There is no such free and detailed biography as we have of Words-

worth or Shelley. Neither are the essays in criticism of Keats so good as those on other poets. Arnold's (*Essays in Criticism, Second Series*) is hardly fair; Swinburne's (*Miscellanies*) is perhaps overdone; as good as any, possibly, is J. R. Lowell's (*Prose Works*, vol. I). Shelley's great Elegy (*Adonais*) is based on a misapprehension of the facts of Keats's illness. Leigh Hunt's memories of Keats (in *Lord Byron and Some of his Contemporaries*), and in his *Autobiography* are interesting but fragmentary and not altogether reliable.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

POEMS OF WORDSWORTH

THE REVERIE OF POOR SUSAN

At the corner of Wood Street, when daylight appears,
Hangs a Thrush that sings loud, it has sung for three years:
Poor Susan has pass'd by the spot, and has heard
In the silence of morning the song of the bird.

'T is a note of enchantment; what ails her? She sees
A mountain ascending, a vision of trees;
Bright volumes of vapor through Lothbury glide,
And a river flows on through the vale of Cheapside.

Green pastures she views in the midst of the dale
Down which she so often has tripp'd with her pail;
And a single small cottage, a nest like a dove's,
The one only dwelling on earth that she loves.

She looks, and her heart is in heaven: but they fade,
The mist and the river, the hill and the shade;
The stream will not flow, and the hill will not rise,
And the colors have all pass'd away from her eyes!

SIMON LEE THE OLD HUNTSMAN

In the sweet shire of Cardigan,
Not far from pleasant Ivor Hall,
An old man dwells, a little man,—
'T is said he once was tall.

Full five-and-thirty years he lived
A running huntsman merry;
And still the center of his cheek
Is red as a ripe cherry.

No man like him the horn could sound,
And hill and valley rang with glee,
When Echo bandied, round and round,
The halloo of Simon Lee.
In those proud days he little cared
For husbandry or tillage;
To blither tasks did Simon rouse
The sleepers of the village.

He all the country could outrun,
Could leave both man and horse behind;
And often, ere the chase was done,
He reel'd and was stone-blind.
And still there 's something in the world
At which his heart rejoices;
For when the chiming hounds are out,
He dearly loves their voices.

But oh the heavy change!—bereft
Of health, strength, friends and kindred, see!
Old Simon to the world is left
In liveried poverty:—
His master 's dead, and no one now
Dwells in the Hall of Ivor;
Men, dogs, and horses, all are dead;
He is the sole survivor.

And he is lean and he is sick,
His body, dwindled and awry,
Rests upon ankles swoln and thick;
His legs are thin and dry.

One prop he has, and only one,—
His wife, an aged woman,
Lives with him, near the waterfall,
Upon the village common.

Beside their moss-grown hut of clay,
Not twenty paces from the door,
A scrap of land they have, but they
Are poorest of the poor.
This scrap of land he from the heath
Enclosed when he was stronger;
But what to them avails the land
Which he can till no longer?

Oft, working by her husband's side,
Ruth does what Simon cannot do;
For she, with scanty cause for pride,
Is stouter of the two.
And, though you with your utmost skill
From labor could not wean them,
'T is little, very little, all
That they can do between them.

Few months of life has he in store
As he to you will tell,
For still, the more he works, the more
Do his weak ankles swell.
My gentle Reader, I perceive
How patiently you 've waited,
And now I fear that you expect
Some tale will be related.

O Reader! had you in your mind
Such stores as silent thought can bring,
O gentle Reader! you would find
A tale in every thing.

What more I have to say is short,
And you must kindly take it:
It is no tale; but, should you think,
Perhaps a tale you 'll make it.

One summer-day I chanced to see
This old Man doing all he could
To unearth the root of an old tree,
A stump of rotten wood.
The mattock totter'd in his hand;
So vain was his endeavor
That at the root of the old tree
He might have work'd for ever.

"You 're overtask'd, good Simon Lee,
Give me your tool," to him I said;
And at the word right gladly he
Received my proffer'd aid.
I struck, and with a single blow
The tangled root I sever'd,
At which the poor old man so long
And vainly had endeavor'd.

The tears into his eyes were brought,
And thanks and praises seem'd to run
So fast out of his heart, I thought
They never would have done.
—I 've heard of hearts unkind, kind deed
With coldness still returning;
Alas! the gratitude of men
Hath oftener left me mourning.

LINES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING

I HEARD a thousand blended notes
While in a grove I sate reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran;
And much it grieved my heart to think
What Man has made of Man.

Through primrose tufts, in that sweet bower,
The periwinkle trail'd its wreaths;
And 't is my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopp'd and play'd,
Their thoughts I cannot measure,—
But the least motion which they made
It seem'd a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan
To catch the breezy air;
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

If this belief from heaven be sent,
If such be Nature's holy plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What Man has made of Man?

THE TWO APRIL MORNINGS

We walk'd along, while bright and red
Uprose the morning sun;
And Matthew stopp'd, he look'd, and said
"The will of God be done!"

A village schoolmaster was he,
With hair of glittering gray;
As blithe a man as you could see
On a spring holiday.

And on that morning, through the grass
And by the steaming rills
We travel'd merrily, to pass
A day among the hills.

"Our work," said I, "was well begun;
Then, from thy breast what thought,
Beneath so beautiful a sun,
So sad a sigh has brought?"

A second time did Matthew stop;
And fixing still his eye
Upon the eastern mountain-top,
To me he made reply:

"Yon cloud with that long purple cleft
Brings fresh into my mind
A day like this, which I have left
Full thirty years behind.

"And just above yon slope of corn
Such colors, and no other,
Were in the sky that April morn,
Of this the very brother.

"With rod and line I sued the sport
Which that sweet season gave,
And to the churchyard come, stopp'd short
Beside my daughter's grave.

"Nine summers had she scarcely seen,
The pride of all the vale;
And then she sang,—she would have been
A very nightingale.

"Six feet in earth my Emma lay;
And yet I loved her more—
For so it seem'd,—than till that day
I e'er had loved before.

"And turning from her grave, I met,
Beside the churchyard yew,
A blooming Girl, whose hair was wet
With points of morning dew.

"A basket on her head she bare;
Her brow was smooth and white:
To see a child so very fair,
It was a pure delight!

"No fountain from its rocky cave
E'er tripped with foot so free;
She seem'd as happy as a wave
That dances on the sea.

"There came from me a sigh of pain
Which I could ill confine;
I look'd at her, and look'd again:
And did not wish her mine!"

—Matthew is in his grave, yet now
Methinks I see him stand
As at that moment, with a bough
Of wilding in his hand.

THE FOUNTAIN

A CONVERSATION

We talk'd with open heart, and tongue
Affectionate and true,
A pair of friends, though I was young,
And Matthew seventy-two.

We lay beneath a spreading oak,
Beside a mossy seat;
And from the turf a fountain broke
And gurgled at our feet.

"Now, Matthew!" said I, "let us match
This water's pleasant tune
With some old border-song, or catch
That suits a summer's noon;

"Or of the church-clock and the chimes
Sing here beneath the shade
That half-mad thing of witty rimes
Which you last April made!"

In silence Matthew lay, and eyed
The spring beneath the tree;
And thus the dear old man replied,
The gray-hair'd man of glee:

"No check, no stay, this Streamlet fears,
How merrily it goes!
'T will murmur on a thousand years
And flow as now it flows.

"And here, on this delightful day,
I cannot choose but think
How oft, a vigorous man, I lay
Beside this fountain's brink.

"My eyes are dim with childish tears,
My heart is idly stirr'd,
For the same sound is in my ears
Which in those days I heard.

"Thus fares it still in our decay:
And yet the wiser mind
Mourns less for what Age takes away,
Than what it leaves behind.

"The blackbird amid leafy trees,
The lark above the hill,
Let loose their carols when they please,
Are quiet when they will.

"With Nature never do they wage
A foolish strife; they see
A happy youth, and their old age
Is beautiful and free:

"But we are press'd by heavy laws;
And often, glad no more,
We wear a face of joy, because
We have been glad of yore.

"If there be one who need bemoan
His kindred laid in earth,
The household hearts that were his own,—
It is the man of mirth.

"My days, my friend, are almost gone,
My life has been approved,
And many love me; but by none
Am I enough beloved."

"Now both himself and me he wrongs,
The man who thus complains!
I live and sing my idle songs
Upon these happy plains:

"And Matthew, for thy children dead
I 'll be a son to thee!"
At this he grasp'd my hand and said,
"Alas! that cannot be."

—We rose up from the fountain-side;
And down the smooth descent
Of the green sheep-track did we glide;
And through the wood we went;

And ere we came to Leonard's rock
He sang those witty rimes
About the crazy old church-clock,
And the bewilder'd chimes.

SHE DWELT AMONG THE UNTRODDEN WAYS

She dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove;
A maid whom there were none to praise,
And very few to love.

A violet by a mossy stone
Half-hidden from the eye!
—Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and oh,
The difference to me!

I TRAVEL'D AMONG UNKNOWN MEN

I TRAVEL'D among unknown men
In lands beyond the sea;
Nor, England! did I know till then
What love I bore to thee.

'T is past, that melancholy dream!
Nor will I quit thy shore
A second time; for still I seem
To love thee more and more.

Among thy mountains did I feel
The joy of my desire;
And she I cherish'd turn'd her wheel
Beside an English fire.

Thy mornings show'd, thy nights conceal'd
The bowers where Lucy play'd;
And thine too is the last green field
That Lucy's eyes survey'd.

THE EDUCATION OF NATURE

THREE years she grew in sun and shower;
Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown:
This Child I to myself will take;
She shall be mine, and I will make
A lady of my own.

"Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse: and with me
The girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle or restrain.

"She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn
Or up the mountain springs;
And her's shall be the breathing balm,
And her's the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things.

"The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her; for her the willow bend;
Nor shall she fail to see
Ev'n in the motions of the storm
Grace that shall mould the maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

"The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

"And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell."

Thus Nature spake—The work was done—
How soon my Lucy's race was run!
She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm and quiet scene;
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

A SLUMBER DID MY SPIRIT SEAL

A SLUMBER did my spirit seal;
I had no human fears:
She seem'd a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force;
She neither hears nor sees;
Roll'd round in earth's diurnal course
With rocks, and stones, and trees.

LUCY GRAY

OFT I had heard of Lucy Gray:
And when I cross'd the wild,
I chanced to see at break of day
The solitary child.

No mate, no comrade Lucy knew;
She dwelt on a wide moor,
The sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door!

You yet may spy the fawn at play,
The hare upon the green;
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
Will never more be seen.

"To-night will be a stormy night—
You to the town must go;
And take a lantern, Child, to light
Your mother through the snow."

"That, Father! will I gladly do:
'T is scarcely afternoon—
The minster-clock has just struck two,
And yonder is the moon!"

At this the father raised his hook,
And snapp'd a faggot-band;
He plied his work;—and Lucy took
The lantern in her hand.

Not blither is the mountain roe:
With many a wanton stroke
Her feet disperse the powdery snow,
That rises up like smoke.

The storm came on before its time:
She wander'd up and down;
And many a hill did Lucy climb:
But never reach'd the town.

The wretched parents all that night
Went shouting far and wide;
But there was neither sound nor sight
To serve them for a guide.

At day-break on a hill they stood
That overlook'd the moor;
And thence they saw the bridge of wood
A furlong from their door.

They wept—and, turning homeward, cried
"In heaven we all shall meet!"
—When in the snow the mother spied
The print of Lucy's feet.

Then downward from the steep hill's edge
They track'd the footmarks small;
And through the broken hawthorn hedge,
And by the long stone wall:

And then an open field they cross'd:
The marks were still the same;
They track'd them on, nor ever lost;
And to the bridge they came:

They followed from the snowy bank
Those footmarks, one by one,
Into the middle of the plank;
And further there were none!

—Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living child;
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome wild.

O'er rough and smooth she trips along,
And never looks behind;
And sing a solitary song
That whistles in the wind.

RUTH: OR THE INFLUENCES OF NATURE

When Ruth was left half desolate
Her father took another mate;
And Ruth, not seven years old,
A slighted child, at her own will
Went wandering over dale and hill,
In thoughtless freedom, bold.

And she had made a pipe of straw,
And music from that pipe could draw
Like sounds of winds and floods;
Had built a bower upon the green,
As if she from her birth had been
An infant of the woods.

Beneath her father's roof, alone
She seem'd to live; her thoughts her own;
Herself her own delight:
Pleased with herself, nor sad nor gay;
And passing thus the live-long day,
She grew to woman's height.

There came a youth from Georgia's shore—
A military casque he wore
With splendid feathers drest;
He brought them from the Cherokees;
The feathers nodded in the breeze
And made a gallant crest.

From Indian blood you deem him sprung:
But no! he spake the English tongue
And bore a soldier's name;
And, when America was free
From battle and from jeopardy,
He 'cross the ocean came.

With hues of genius on his cheek,
In finest tones the youth could speak:
—While he was yet a boy
The moon, the glory of the sun,
And streams that murmur as they run
Had been his dearest joy.

He was a lovely youth! I guess
The panther in the wilderness
Was not so fair as he;
And when he chose to sport and play,
No dolphin ever was so gay
Upon the tropic sea.

Among the Indians he had fought;
And with him many tales he brought
Of pleasure and of fear;
Such tales as, told to any maid
By such a youth, in the green shade,
Were perilous to hear.

He told of girls, a happy rout!
Who quit their fold with dance and shout,
Their pleasant Indian town,
To gather strawberries all day long;
Returning with a choral song
When daylight is gone down.

He spake of plants that hourly change
Their blossoms, through a boundless range
Of intermingling hues;
With budding, fading, faded flowers,
They stand the wonder of the bowers
From morn to evening dews.

He told of the magnolia, spread
High as a cloud, high over head!
The cypress and her spire;

—Of flowers that with one scarlet gleam
Cover a hundred leagues, and seem
To set the hills on fire.

The youth of green savannahs spake,
And many an endless, endless lake
With all its fairy crowds
Of islands, that together lie
As quietly as spots of sky
Among the evening clouds.

"How pleasant," then he said, "it were
A fisher or a hunter there,
In sunshine or in shade
To wander with an easy mind,
And build a household fire, and find
A home in every glade!

"What days and what bright years! Ah me!
Our life were life indeed, with thee
So pass'd in quiet bliss;
And all the while," said he, "to know
That we were in a world of woe,
On such an earth as this!"

And then he sometimes interwove
Fond thoughts about a father's love,
"For there," said he, "are spun
Around the heart such tender ties,
That our own children to our eyes
Are dearer than the sun.

"Sweet Ruth! and could you go with me
My helpmate in the woods to be,
Our shed at night to rear;

Or run, my own adopted bride,
A sylvan huntress at my side,
And drive the flying deer!

"Beloved Ruth!"—No more he said.
The wakeful Ruth at midnight shed
A solitary tear:
She thought again—and did agree
With him to sail across the sea,
And drive the flying deer.

"And now, as fitting is and right,
We in the church our faith will plight,
A husband and a wife."
Even so they did; and I may say
That to sweet Ruth that happy day
Was more than human life.

Through dream and vision did she sink,
Delighted all the while to think
That, on those lonesome floods
And green savannahs, she should share
His board with lawful joy, and bear
His name in the wild woods.

But, as you have before been told,
This Stripling, sportive, gay, and bold,
And with his dancing crest
So beautiful, through savage lands
Had roam'd about, with vagrant bands
Of Indians in the West.

The wind, the tempest roaring high,
The tumult of a tropic sky
Might well be dangerous food

For him, a youth to whom was given
So much of earth—so much of heaven,
And such impetuous blood.

Whatever in those climes he found
Irregular in sight and sound
Did to his mind impart
A kindred impulse, seem'd allied
To his own powers, and justified
The workings of his heart.

Nor less, to feed voluptuous thought,
The beauteous forms of Nature wrought,—
Fair trees and gorgeous flowers;
The breezes their own languor lent;
The stars had feelings, which they sent
Into those favor'd bowers.

Yet, in his worst pursuits, I ween
That sometimes there did intervene
Pure hopes of high intent:
For passions link'd to forms so fair
And stately, needs must have their share
Of noble sentiment.

But ill he lived, much evil saw,
With men to whom no better law
Nor better life was known;
Deliberately and undeceived
Those wild men's vices he received,
And gave them back his own.

His genius and his moral frame
Were thus impair'd, and he became
The slave of low desires:

A man who without self-control
Would seek what the degraded soul
Unworthily admires.

And yet he with no feign'd delight
Had woo'd the maiden, day and night
Had loved her, night and morn;
What could he less than love a maid
Whose heart with so much nature play'd—
So kind and so forlorn?

Sometimes most earnestly he said,
"O Ruth! I have been worse than dead;
False thoughts, thoughts bold and vain
Encompass'd me on every side
When I, in confidence and pride,
Had cross'd the Atlantic main.

"Before me shone a glorious world
Fresh as a banner bright, unfurl'd
To music suddenly:
I look'd upon those hills and plains,
And seem'd as if let loose from chains
To live at liberty!

"No more of this—for now, by thee,
Dear Ruth! more happily set free,
With nobler zeal I burn;
My soul from darkness is released
Like the whole sky when to the east
The morning doth return."

Full soon that better mind was gone;
No hope, no wish remain'd, not one,—
They stirr'd him now no more;

New objects did new pleasure give,
And once again he wish'd to live
As lawless as before.

Meanwhile, as thus with him it fared,
They for the voyage were prepared,
And went to the sea-shore:
But, when they thither came, the youth
Deserted his poor bride, and Ruth
Could never find him more.

God help thee, Ruth!—Such pains she had
That she in half a year was mad
And in a prison housed;
And there, with many a doleful song
Made of wild words, her cup of wrong
She fearfully caroused.

Yet sometimes milder hours she knew,
Nor wanted sun, nor rain, nor dew,
Nor pastimes of the May,
—They all were with her in her cell;
And a clear brook with cheerful knell
Did o'er the pebbles play.

When Ruth three seasons thus had lain,
There came a respite to her pain;
She from her prison fled;
But of the Vagrant none took thought;
And where it liked her best she sought
Her shelter and her bread.

Among the fields she breathed again:
The master-current of her brain
Ran permanent and free;

And, coming to the banks of Tone,
There did she rest; and dwell alone
Under the greenwood tree.

The engines of her pain, the tools
That shaped her sorrow, rocks and pools,
And airs that gently stir
The vernal leaves—she loved them still,
Nor ever tax'd them with the ill
Which had been done to her.

A barn her Winter bed supplies;
But, till the warmth of Summer skies
And Summer days is gone,
(And all do in this tale agree)
She sleeps beneath the greenwood tree,
And other home hath none.

An innocent life, yet far astray!
And Ruth will, long before her day,
Be broken down and old.
Sore aches she needs must have! but less
Of mind, than body's wretchedness,
From damp, and rain, and cold.

If she is prest by want of food
She from her dwelling in the wood
Repairs to a road-side;
And there she begs at one steep place
Where up and down with easy pace
The horsemen-travelers ride.

That oaten pipe of hers is mute
Or thrown away: but with a flute
Her loneliness she cheers;

This flute, made of a hemlock stalk,
At evening in his homeward walk
The Quantock woodman hears.

I, too, have pass'd her on the hills
Setting her little water-mills
By spouts and fountains wild—
Such small machinery as she turn'd
Ere she had wept, ere she had mourn'd,—
A young and happy child!

Farewell! and when thy days are told,
Ill-fated Ruth! in hallow'd mould
Thy corpse shall buried be;
For thee a funeral bell shall ring,
And all the congregation sing
A Christian psalm for thee.

ENGLAND AND SWITZERLAND, 1802

Two Voices are there; one is of the Sea,
One of the Mountains; each a mighty voice:
In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,
They were thy chosen music, Liberty!
There came a tyrant, and with holy glee
Thou fought'st against him,—but hast vainly striven:
Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art driven,
Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.
—Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft;
Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is left—
For, high-soul'd Maid, what sorrow would it be
That Mountain floods should thunder as before,
And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
And neither awful Voice be heard by Thee!

ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC

Once did She hold the gorgeous East in fee
And was the safeguard of the West; the worth
Of Venice did not fall below her birth,
Venice, the eldest child of Liberty.
She was a maiden city, bright and free;
No guile seduced, no force could violate;
And when she took unto herself a mate,
She must espouse the everlasting Sea.
And what if she has seen those glories fade,
Those titles vanish, and that strength decay,—
Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid
When her long life hath reach'd its final day:
Men are we, and must grieve when even the shade
Of that which once was great is pass'd away.

LONDON, 1802

O Friend! I know not which way I must look
For comfort, being, as I am, opprest
To think that now our life is only drest
For show; mean handy-work of craftsman, cook,
Or groom!—We must run glittering like a brook
In the open sunshine, or we are unblest;
The wealthiest man among us is the best:
No grandeur now in nature or in book
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
This is idolatry; and these we adore:
Plain living and high thinking are no more:
The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone; our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household laws.

TO MILTON

Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men:
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea,
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free;
So didst thou travel on life's common way
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

WHEN I HAVE BORNE IN MEMORY

When I have borne in memory what has tamed
Great nations; how ennobling thoughts depart
When men change swords for ledgers, and desert
The student's bower for gold,—some fears unnamed
I had, my Country!—am I to be blamed?
Now, when I think of thee, and what thou art,
Verily, in the bottom of my heart
Of those unfilial fears I am ashamed.
For dearly must we prize thee; we who find
In thee a bulwark for the cause of men;
And I by my affection was beguiled:
What wonder if a Poet now and then,
Among the many movements of his mind,
Felt for thee as a lover or a child!

UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE
SEPTEMBER 3, 1802

Earth has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning: silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theaters, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky,—
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendor valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

BY THE SEA

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free;
The holy time is quiet as a Nun
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
The gentleness of heaven is on the Sea:
Listen! the mighty Being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder—everlastingly.
Dear child! dear girl! that walkest with me here,
If thou appear untouch'd by solemn thought
Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year
And worshipp'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not

TO THE DAISY

With little here to do or see
Of things that in the great world be,
Sweet Daisy! oft I talk to thee
For thou art worthy,
Thou unassuming Common-place
Of Nature, with that homely face,
And yet with something of a grace
Which Love makes for thee!

Oft on the dappled turf at ease
I sit and play with similes,
Loose types of things through all degrees,
Thoughts of thy raising;
And many a fond and idle name
I give to thee, for praise or blame
As is the humor of the game,
While I am gazing.

A nun demure, of lowly port;
Or sprightly maiden, of Love's court,
In thy simplicity the sport
Of all temptations;
A queen in crown of rubies drest;
A starveling in a scanty vest;
Are all, as seems to suit thee best,
Thy appellations.

A little Cyclops, with one eye
Staring to threaten and defy,
That thought comes next—and instantly
The freak is over,

The shape will vanish, and behold!
A silver shield with boss of gold
That spreads itself, some faery bold
In fight to cover.

I see thee glittering from afar—
And then thou art a pretty star,
Not quite so fair as many are
In heaven above thee!
Yet like a star with glittering crest,
Self-poised in air thou seem'st to rest;—
May peace come never to his nest
Who shall reprove thee!

Sweet Flower! for by that name at last
When all my reveries are past
I call thee, and to that cleave fast,
Sweet silent Creature!
That breath'st with me in sun and air,
Do thou, as thou art wont, repair
My heart with gladness, and a share
Of thy meek nature!

THE RAINBOW

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began,
So is it now I am a man,
So be it when I shall grow old
Or let me die!
The Child is father of the Man:
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety

COMPOSED AT NEIDPATH CASTLE, THE PROPERTY OF LORD QUEENSBERRY

1803

Degenerate Douglas! oh, the unworthy lord!
Whom mere despite of heart could so far please
And love of havoc, (for with such disease
Fame taxes him,) that he could send forth word
To level with the dust a noble horde,
A brotherhood of venerable trees,
Leaving an ancient dome, and towers like these,
Beggar'd and outraged!—Many hearts deplored
The fate of those old trees; and oft with pain
The traveler at this day will stop and gaze
On wrongs, which Nature scarcely seems to heed:
For shelter'd places, bosoms, nooks, and bays,
And the pure mountains, and the gentle Tweed,
And the green silent pastures, yet remain.

TO THE HIGHLAND GIRL OF INVERSNEYDE

Sweet Highland Girl, a very shower
Of beauty is thy earthly dower!
Twice seven consenting years have shed
Their utmost bounty on thy head:
And these gray rocks, that household lawn,
Those trees—a veil just half withdrawn,
This fall of water that doth make
A murmur near the silent lake,
This little bay, a quiet road
That holds in shelter thy abode:
In truth together ye do seem
Like something fashion'd in a dream;

Such forms as from their covert peep
When earthly cares are laid asleep!
But O fair Creature! in the light
O common day, so heavenly bright
I bless Thee, Vision as thou art,
I bless thee with a human heart:
God shield thee to thy latest years!
Thee neither know I nor thy peers:
And yet my eyes are fill'd with tears.

With earnest feeling I shall pray
For thee when I am far away;
For never saw I mien or face
In which more plainly I could trace
Benignity and home-bred sense
Ripening in perfect innocence.
Here scatter'd, like a random seed,
Remote from men, Thou dost not need
The embarrass'd look of shy distress,
And maidenly shamefacédness:
Thou wear'st upon thy forehead clear
The freedom of a Mountaineer:
A face with gladness overspread;
Soft smiles, by human kindness bred;
And seemliness complete, that sways
Thy courtesies, about thee plays;
With no restraint, but such as springs
From quick and eager visitings
Of thoughts that lie beyond the reach
Of thy few words of English speech:
A bondage sweetly brook'd, a strife
That gives thy gestures grace and life!
So have I, not unmoved in mind,
Seen birds of tempest-loving kind—
Thus beating up against the wind.

What hand but would a garland cull
For thee who art so beautiful?
O happy pleasure! here to dwell
Beside thee in some healthy dell;
Adopt your homely ways, and dress,
A shepherd, thou a shepherdess!
But I could frame a wish for thee
More like a grave reality:
Thou art to me but as a wave
Of the wild sea: and I would have
Some claim upon thee, if I could,
Though but of common neighborhood.
What joy to hear thee, and to see!
Thy elder brother I would be,
Thy father—anything to thee.

Now thanks to Heaven! that of its grace
Hath led me to this lonely place:
Joy have I had; and going hence
I bear away my recompence.
In spots like these it is we prize
Our Memory, feel that she hath eyes:
Then why should I be loth to stir?
I feel this place was made for her;
To give new pleasure like the past,
Continued long as life shall last.
Nor am I loth, though pleased at heart,
Sweet Highland Girl! from thee to part;
For I, methinks, till I grow old
As fair before me shall behold
As I do now, the cabin small,
The lake, the bay, the waterfall;
And Thee, the Spirit of them all!

THE SOLITARY REAPER

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travelers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the cuckoo-bird
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again!

Whate'er the theme, the maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;—

I listen'd, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore
Long after it was heard no more.

GLEN-ALMAIN, THE NARROW GLEN

In this still place, remote from men,
Sleeps Ossian, in the Narrow Glen;
In this still place, where murmurs on
But one meek streamlet, only one:
He sang of battles, and the breath
Of stormy war, and violent death;
And should, methinks, when all was past,
Have rightfully been laid at last
Where rocks were rudely heap'd, and rent
As by a spirit turbulent;
Where sights were rough, and sounds were wild,
And everything unreconciled;
In some complaining, dim retreat,
For fear and melancholy meet;
But this is calm; there cannot be
A more entire tranquillity.

Does then the Bard sleep here indeed?
Or is it but a groundless creed?
What matters it?—I blame them not
Whose fancy in this lonely spot
Was moved; and in such way express'd
Their notion of its perfect rest.
A convent, even a hermit's cell,
Would break the silence of this Dell:
It is not quiet, is not ease;
But something deeper far than these:

Mary Wordsworth.
28

The separation that is here
Is of the grave; and of austere
Yet happy feelings of the dead:
And, therefore, was it rightly said
That Ossian, last of all his race!
Lies buried in this lonely place.

THE GREEN LINNET

Beneath these fruit-tree boughs that shed
Their snow-white blossoms on my head,
With brightest sunshine round me spread
Of Spring's unclouded weather,
In this sequester'd nook how sweet
To sit upon my orchard-seat!
And flowers and birds once more to greet,
My last year's friends together.

One have I mark'd, the happiest guest
In all this covert of the blest:
Hail to Thee, far above the rest
In joy of voice and pinion!
Thou, Linnet! in thy green array
Presiding Spirit here to-day
Dost lead the revels of the May;
And this is thy dominion.

While birds, and butterflies, and flowers,
Make all one band of paramours,
Thou, ranging up and down the bowers,
Art sole in thy employment;
A Life, a Presence like the air,
Scattering thy gladness without care,
Too blest with any one to pair;
Thyself thy own enjoyment.

Amid yon tuft of hazel trees
That twinkle to the gusty breeze,
Behold him perch'd in ecstasies
Yet seeming still to hover;
There! where the flutter of his wings
Upon his back and body flings
Shadows and sunny glimmerings,
That cover him all over.

My dazzled sight he oft deceives—
A brother of the dancing leaves;
Then flits, and from the cottage-eaves
Pours forth his song in gushes;
As if by that exulting strain
He mock'd and treated with disdain
The voiceless Form he chose to feign,
While fluttering in the bushes.

SHE WAS A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT

Mary Twigmaster

She was a Phantom of delight
When first she gleam'd upon my sight;
A lovely Apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament;
Her eyes as stars of twilight fair;
Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful dawn;
A dancing shape, an image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and waylay.

I saw her upon nearer view,
A Spirit, yet a Woman too!
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin-liberty;

A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet;
A creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food,
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine;
A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveler between life and death:
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect Woman, nobly plann'd
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a Spirit still, and bright
With something of an angel-light.

A LESSON

THERE is a Flower, the lesser Celandine,
That shrinks like many more from cold and rain,
And the first moment that the sun may shine,
Bright as the sun himself, 't is out again!

When hailstones have been falling, swarm on swarm,
Or blasts the green field and the trees distrest,
Oft have I seen it muffled up from harm
In close self-shelter, like a thing at rest.

But lately, one rough day, this Flower I past,
And recognized it, though an alter'd form,
Now standing forth an offering to the blast,
And buffeted at will by rain and storm.

I stopp'd and said, with inly-mutter'd voice,
"It doth not love the shower, nor seek the cold
This neither is its courage nor its choice,
But its necessity in being old.

"The sunshine may not cheer it, nor the dew;
It cannot help itself in its decay;
Stiff in its members, wither'd, changed of hue,"—
And, in my spleen, I smiled that it was gray.

To be a prodigal's favorite—then, worse truth,
A miser's pensioner—behold our lot!
O Man! that from thy fair and shining youth
Age might but take the things Youth needed not!

THE AFFLICTION OF MARGARET

Where art thou, my beloved Son,
Where art thou, worse to me than dead?
Oh find me, prosperous or undone!
Or if the grave be now thy bed,
Why am I ignorant of the same
That I may rest; and neither blame
Nor sorrow may attend thy name?

Seven years, alas! to have received
No tidings of an only child—
To have despair'd, have hoped, believed,
And been for evermore beguiled,—
Sometimes with thoughts of very bliss!
I catch at them, and then I miss;
Was ever darkness like to this?

He was among the prime in worth,
An object beauteous to behold;
Well born, well bred; I sent him forth

Ingenuous, innocent, and bold:
If things ensued that wanted grace
As hath been said, they were not base;
And never blush was on my face.

Ah! little doth the young-one dream
When full of play and childish cares,
What power is in his wildest scream
Heard by his mother unawares!
He knows it not, he cannot guess;
Years to a mother bring distress;
But do not make her love the less.

Neglect me! no, I suffer'd long
From that ill thought; and being blind
Said " Pride shall help me in my wrong:
Kind mother have I been, as kind
As ever breathed:" and that is true;
I 've wet my path with tears like dew,
Weeping for him when no one knew.

My Son, if thou be humbled, poor,
Hopeless of honor and of gain,
Oh! do not dread thy mother's door;
Think not of me with grief and pain:
I now can see with better eyes;
And worldly grandeur I despise
And fortune with her gifts and lies.

Alas! the fowls of heaven have wings,
And blasts of heaven will aid their flight;
They mount—how short a voyage brings
The wanderers back to their delight!
Chains tie us down by land and sea;
And wishes, vain as mine, may be
All that is left to comfort thee.

Perhaps some dungeon hears thee groan
Maim'd, mangled by inhuman men;
Or thou upon a desert thrown
Inheritest the lion's den;
Or hast been summon'd to the deep
Thou, thou, and all thy mates, to keep
An incommunicable sleep.

I look for ghosts: but none will force
Their way to me; 't is falsely said
That there was ever intercourse
Between the living and the dead;
For surely then I should have sight
Of him I wait for day and night
With love and longings infinite.

My apprehensions come in crowds
I dread the rustling of the grass;
The very shadows of the clouds
Have power to shake me as they pass:
I question things, and do not find
One that will answer to my mind;
And all the world appears unkind.

Beyond participation lie
My troubles, and beyond relief:
If any chance to heave a sigh
They pity me, and not my grief.
Then come to me, my Son, or send
Some tidings that my woes may end!
I have no other earthly friend.

TO THE CUCKOO

O BLITHE new-comer! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice:
O Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice?

While I am lying on the grass
Thy twofold shout I hear;
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off and near.

Though babbling only to the vale
Of sunshine and of flowers,
Thou bringest unto me a tale
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!
Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery;

The same whom in my school-boy days
I listen'd to; that Cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green;
And thou wert still a hope, a love;
Still long'd for, never seen!

And I can listen to thee yet;
Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
That golden time again.

O blesséd Bird! the earth we pace
Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, faery place,
That is fit home for Thee!

THE DAFFODILS

I WANDER'D lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils,
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretch'd in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:—
A Poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company!
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought;

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

ODE TO DUTY

Stern Daughter of the Voice of God!
O Duty! if that name thou love
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove;
Thou who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe:
From vain temptations dost set free,
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity!

There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them; who, in love and truth
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth:
Glad hearts! without reproach or blot,
Who do thy work, and know it not:
Oh! if through confidence misplaced
They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power! around them cast.

Serene will be our days and bright
And happy will our nature be
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.
And they a blissful course may hold
Ev'n now, who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed;
Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need.

I, loving freedom, and untried,
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,
Too blindly have reposed my trust;

And oft, when in my heart was heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferr'd
The task, in smoother walks to stray;
But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy control,
But in the quietness of thought:
Me this uncharter'd freedom tires;
I feel the weight of chance-desires:
My hopes no more must change their name;
I long for a repose that ever is the same.

Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face:
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds,
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the Stars from wrong;
And the most ancient Heavens, through Thee, are fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power!
I call thee: I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour;
Oh let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason give;
And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me live.

TO THE SKYLARK

Ethereal minstrel! pilgrim of the sky!
Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound?
Or while the wings aspire, are heart and eye
Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground?
Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will,
Those quivering wings composed, that music still!

To the last point of vision, and beyond
Mount, daring warbler!—that love-prompted strain
—'Twixt thee and thine a never-failing bond—
Thrills not the less the bosom of the plain:
Yet might'st thou seem, proud privilege! to sing
All independent of the leafy Spring.

Leave to the nightingale her shady wood;
A privacy of glorious light is thine,
Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood
Of harmony, with instinct more divine;
Type of the wise, who soar, but never roam—
True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home.

NATURE AND THE POET

SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE OF PEELE CASTLE IN A STORM, PAINTED BY SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT

I was thy neighbor once, thou rugged Pile!
Four summer weeks I dwelt in sight of thee:
I saw thee every day; and all the while
Thy Form was sleeping on a glassy sea.

So pure the sky, so quiet was the air!
So like, so very like, was day to day!
Whene'er I look'd, thy image still was there;
It trembled, but it never pass'd away.

How perfect was the calm! It seem'd no sleep,
No mood, which season takes away, or brings:
I could have fancied that the mighty Deep
Was even the gentlest of all gentle things.

Ah! then—if mine had been the painter's hand
To express what then I saw; and add the gleam
The light that never was on sea or land,
The consecration, and the Poet's dream,—

I would have planted thee, thou hoary pile,
Amid a world how different from this!
Beside a sea that could not cease to smile;
On tranquil land, beneath a sky of bliss.

Thou shouldst have seem'd a treasure-house divine
Of peaceful years; a chronicle of heaven;—
Of all the sunbeams that did ever shine
The very sweetest had to thee been given.

A picture had it been of lasting ease,
Elysian quiet, without toil or strife;
No motion but the moving tide; a breeze,
Or merely silent Nature's breathing life.

Such, in the fond illusion of my heart,
Such picture would I at that time have made;
And seen the soul of truth in every part,
A steadfast peace that might not be betray'd.

So once it would have been,—'t is so no more;
I have submitted to a new control:
A power is gone, which nothing can restore;
A deep distress hath humanized my soul.

Not for a moment could I now behold
A smiling sea, and be what I have been:
The feeling of my loss will ne'er be old;
This, which I know, I speak with mind serene.

Then, Beaumont, Friend! who would have been the friend
If he had lived, of Him whom I deplore,
This work of thine I blame not, but commend;
This sea in anger, and that dismal shore.

O 't is a passionate work!—yet wise and well,
Well chosen is the spirit that is here;
That hulk which labors in the deadly swell,
This rueful sky, this pageantry of fear!

And this huge Castle, standing here sublime,
I love to see the look with which it braves,
—Cased in the unfeeling armor of old time—
The lightning, the fierce wind, and trampling waves.

—Farewell, farewell the heart that lives alone
Housed in a dream, at distance from the Kind!
Such happiness, wherever it be known,
Is to be pitied; for 't is surely blind.

But welcome fortitude, and patient cheer,
And frequent sights of what is to be borne!
Such sights, or worse, as are before me here:—
Not without hope we suffer and we mourn.

ADMONITION TO A TRAVELER

YES, there is holy pleasure in thine eye!
—The lovely Cottage in the guardian nook
Hath stirr'd thee deeply; with its own dear brook,
Its own small pasture, almost its own sky!
But covet not the abode; forbear to sigh
As many do, repining while they look;
Intruders—who would tear from Nature's book
This precious leaf with harsh impiety.
—Think what the home must be if it were thine,
Even thine, though few thy wants!—Roof, window, door,
The very flowers are sacred to the Poor,
The roses to the porch which they entwine:
Yea, all that now enchants thee, from the day
On which it should be touch'd, would melt away!

TO SLEEP

A FLOCK of sheep that leisurely pass by
One after one; the sound of rain, and bees
Murmuring; the fall of rivers, winds and seas,
Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and pure sky;
I 've thought of all by turns, and yet do lie
Sleepless; and soon the small bird's melodies
Must hear, first utter'd from my orchard trees,
And the first cuckoo's melancholy cry.
Even thus last night, and two nights more I lay,
And could not win thee, Sleep! by any stealth:
So do not let me wear tonight away:
Without Thee what is all the morning's wealth?
Come, blesséd barrier between day and day,
Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health!

THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US

THE World is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon,
The winds that will be howling at all hours
And are up-gather'd now like sleeping flowers,
For this, for every thing, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.—Great God! I 'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn,—
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathéd horn.

ODE ON INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

I

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight
To me did seem
Apparel'd in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore;—
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

II

The rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the rose;
The moon doth with delight

Look round her when the heavens are bare;
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath past away a glory from the earth.

III

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song.
And while the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief:
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong.
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;—
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong:
I hear the echoes through the mountains throng,
The winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
And all the earth is gay;
Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every beast keep holiday;—
Thou child of joy
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy
Shepherd-boy!

IV

Ye blesséd Creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal,
The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
Oh evil day! if I were sullen

While Earth herself is adorning
This sweet May-morning;
And the children are culling
On every side
In a thousand valleys far and wide,
Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm
And the babe leaps up on his mother's arm:—
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!
—But there 's a tree, of many, one,
A single field which I have look'd upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone:
The pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat:
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

V

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting
And cometh from afar;
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory we do come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

VI

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And, even with something of a mother's mind
And no unworthy aim,
The homely nurse doth all she can
To make her foster-child, her inmate, Man,
Forget the glories he hath known
And that imperial palace whence he came.

VII

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
A six years' darling of a pigmy size!
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
With light upon him from his father's eyes!
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
Some fragment from his dream of human life,
Shaped by himself with newly-learnéd art;
A wedding or a festival,
A mourning or a funeral;
And this hath now his heart,
And unto this he frames his song:
Then will he fit his tongue
To dialogues of business, love, or strife;
But it will not be long
Ere this be thrown aside,
And with new joy and pride
The little actor cons another part;
Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"
With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
That life brings with her in her equipage;
As if his whole vocation
Were endless imitation.

VIII

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
Thy soul's immensity;
Thou best philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
Haunted for ever by the eternal Mind,—
Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
On whom those truths do rest
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
Thou, over whom thy Immortality
Broods like the day, a master o'er a slave,
A Presence which is not to be put by;
Thou little child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
Full soon thy soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

IX

O joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That Nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!
The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benediction: not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest,
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast:—

—Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise;
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a creature
Moving about in worlds not realized,
High instincts, before which our mortal nature
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised:
But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain-light of all our day,
Are yet a master-light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,
To perish never;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavor,
Nor man nor boy
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!
Hence, in a season of calm weather
Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither;
Can in a moment travel thither—
And see the children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

X

Then, sing ye birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
And let the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound!
We, in thought, will join your throng
Ye that pipe and ye that play,

Ye that through your hearts to-day
Feel the gladness of the May!
What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now for ever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind;
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering;
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

XI

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,
Forbode not any severing of our loves!
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
I only have relinquish'd one delight
To live beneath your more habitual sway:
I love the brooks which down their channels fret
Even more than when I tripp'd lightly as they;
The innocent brightness of a new-born day
Is lovely yet;
The clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober coloring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;
Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

YARROW UNVISITED

1803

From Stirling Castle we had seen
The mazy Forth unravel'd,
Had trod the banks of Clyde and Tay,
And with the Tweed had travel'd;
And when we came to Clovenford,
Then said my "winsome Marrow,"
"Whate'er betide, we 'll turn aside,
And see the Braes of Yarrow."

"Let Yarrow folk, frae Selkirk town,
Who have been buying, selling,
Go back to Yarrow, 't is their own,
Each maiden to her dwelling!
On Yarrow's banks let herons feed,
Hares couch, and rabbits burrow;
But we will downward with the Tweed,
Nor turn aside to Yarrow.

"There 's Gala Water, Leader Haughs,
Both lying right before us;
And Dryburgh, where with chiming Tweed
The lintwhites sing in chorus;
There 's pleasant Tiviot-dale, a land
Made blithe with plough and harrow:
Why throw away a needful day
To go in search of Yarrow?

"What 's Yarrow but a river bare
That glides the dark hills under?
There are a thousand such elsewhere
As worthy of your wonder."

—Strange words they seem'd of slight and scorn;
My True-love sigh'd for sorrow,
And look'd me in the face, to think
I thus could speak of Yarrow!

"O green," said I, "are Yarrow's holms,
And sweet is Yarrow flowing!
Fair hangs the apple frae the rock,
But we will leave it growing.
O'er hilly path and open strath
We 'll wander Scotland thorough;
But, though so near, we will not turn
Into the dale of Yarrow.

"Let beeves and home-bred kine partake
The sweets of Burn-mill meadow;
The swan on still Saint Mary's Lake
Float double, swan and shadow!
We will not see them; will not go
To-day, nor yet to-morrow;
Enough if in our hearts we know
There 's such a place as Yarrow.

"Be Yarrow stream unseen, unknown!
It must, or we shall rue it:
We have a vision of our own,
Ah! why should we undo it?
The treasured dreams of times long past,
We 'll keep them, winsome Marrow!
For when we 're there, although 't is fair,
'T will be another Yarrow!

"If Care with freezing years should come
And wandering seem but folly,—
Should we be loth to stir from home,
And yet be melancholy;

Should life be dull, and spirits low,
'T will soothe us in our sorrow
That earth has something yet to show,
The bonny holms of Yarrow!"

YARROW VISITED

SEPTEMBER, 1814

And is this—Yarrow?—This the stream
Of which my fancy cherish'd
So faithfully, a waking dream,
An image that hath perish'd?
O that some minstrel's harp were near
To utter notes of gladness
And chase this silence from the air,
That fills my heart with sadness!

Yet why?—a silvery current flows
With uncontroll'd meanderings;
Nor have these eyes by greener hills
Been soothed, in all my wanderings.
And, through her depths, Saint Mary's Lake
Is visibly delighted;
For not a feature of those hills
Is in the mirror slighted.

A blue sky bends o'er Yarrow Vale,
Save where that pearly whiteness
Is round the rising sun diffused,
A tender hazy brightness;
Mild dawn of promise! that excludes
All profitless dejection;
Though not unwilling here to admit
A pensive recollection.

Where was it that the famous Flower
Of Yarrow Vale lay bleeding?
His bed perchance was yon smooth mound
On which the herd is feeding:
And haply from this crystal pool,
Now peaceful as the morning,
The Water-wraith ascended thrice,
And gave his doleful warning.

Delicious is the lay that sings
The haunts of happy lovers,
The path that leads them to the grove,
The leafy grove that covers:
And pity sanctifies the verse
That paints, by strength of sorrow,
The unconquerable strength of love;
Bear witness, rueful Yarrow!

But thou that didst appear so fair
To fond imagination,
Dost rival in the light of day
Her delicate creation:
Meek loveliness is round thee spread,
A softness still and holy:
The grace of forest charms decay'd,
And pastoral melancholy.

That region left, the vale unfolds
Rich groves of lofty stature,
With Yarrow winding through the pomp
Of cultivated nature;
And rising from those lofty groves
Behold a ruin hoary,
The shatter'd front of Newark's towers,
Renown'd in Border story.

Fair scenes for childhood's opening bloom,
For sportive youth to stray in,
For manhood to enjoy his strength,
And age to wear away in!
Yon cottage seems a bower of bliss,
A covert for protection
Of tender thoughts that nestle there—
The brood of chaste affection.

How sweet on this autumnal day
The wild-wood fruits to gather,
And on my True-love's forehead plant
A crest of blooming heather!
And what if I enwreathed my own?
'T were no offence to reason;
The sober hills thus deck their brows
To meet the wintry season.

I see—but not by sight alone,
Loved Yarrow, have I won thee;
A ray of Fancy still survives—
Her sunshine plays upon thee!
Thy ever-youthful waters keep
A course of lively pleasure;
And gladsome notes my lips can breathe
Accordant to the measure.

The vapors linger round the heights,
They melt, and soon must vanish;
One hour is theirs, nor more is mine—
Sad thought! which I would banish,
But that I know, where'er I go,
Thy genuine image, Yarrow!
Will dwell with me, to heighten joy,
And cheer my mind in sorrow.

DESIDERIA

Surprised by joy—impatient as the wind—
I turn'd to share the transport—Oh! with whom
But Thee—deep buried in the silent tomb,
That spot which no vicissitude can find?
Love, faithful love recall'd thee to my mind—
But how could I forget thee? Through what power
Even for the least division of an hour
Have I been so beguiled as to be blind
To my most grievous loss!—That thought's return
Was the worst pang that sorrow ever bore
Save one, one only, when I stood forlorn,
Knowing my heart's best treasure was no more;
That neither present time, nor years unborn
Could to my sight that heavenly face restore.

WITHIN KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL, CAMBRIDGE

Tax not the royal Saint with vain expense,
With ill-match'd aims the Architect who plann'd
(Albeit laboring for a scanty band
Of white-robed Scholars only) this immense
And glorious work of fine intelligence!
—Give all thou canst; high Heaven rejects the lore
Of nicely-calculated less or more:—
So deem'd the man who fashion'd for the sense
These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof
Self-poised, and scoop'd into ten thousand cells
Where light and shade repose, where music dwells
Lingering—and wandering on as loth to die;
Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof
That they were born for immortality.

THE TROSACHS

There 's not a nook within this solemn Pass,
But were an apt confessional for One
Taught by his summer spent, his autumn gone,
That Life is but a tale of morning grass
Wither'd at eve. From scenes of art which chase
That thought away, turn, and with watchful eyes
Feed it 'mid Nature's old felicities,
Rocks, rivers, and smooth lakes more clear than glass
Untouch'd, unbreathed upon:—Thrice happy quest,
If from a golden perch of aspen spray
(October's workmanship to rival May),
The pensive warbler of the ruddy breast
That moral sweeten by a heaven-taught lay,
Lulling the year, with all its cares, to rest!

THE INNER VISION

Most sweet it is with unuplifted eyes
To pace the ground, if path be there or none,
While a fair region round the traveler lies
Which he forbears again to look upon;
Pleased rather with some soft ideal scene,
The work of Fancy, or some happy tone
Of meditation, slipping in between
The beauty coming and the beauty gone.
—If Thought and Love desert us, from that day
Let us break off all commerce with the Muse:
With Thought and Love companions of our way—
Whate'er the senses take or may refuse,—
The Mind's internal heaven shall shed her dews
Of inspiration on the humblest lay.

TO A DISTANT FRIEND

Why art thou silent! Is thy love a plant
Of such weak fiber that the treacherous air
Of absence withers what was once so fair?
Is there no debt to pay, no boon to grant?
Yet have my thoughts for thee been vigilant,
Bound to thy service with unceasing care—
The mind's least generous wish a mendicant
For nought but what thy happiness could spare.
Speak!—though this soft warm heart, once free to hold
A thousand tender pleasures, thine and mine,
Be left more desolate, more dreary cold
Than a forsaken bird's-nest fill'd with snow
'Mid its own bush of leafless eglantine—
Speak, that my torturing doubts their end may know!

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

POEMS OF COLERIDGE

KUBLA KHAN

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
  Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills
Where blossom'd many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.
  But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momently was forced:
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
And mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momently the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reach'd the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:

And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!
A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she play'd,
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

PART THE FIRST

I

An ancient Mariner meeteth three Gallants bidden to a wedding-feast, and detaineth one

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
"By thy long gray beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

II

"The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide,
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set:
May'st hear the merry din."

III

He holds him with his skinny hand,
"There was a ship," quoth he.
"Hold off! unhand me, gray-beard loon!"
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

The Wedding-Guest is spellbound by the eye of the old seafaring man, and constrained to hear his tale

IV

He holds him with his glittering eye—
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child.
The Mariner hath his will.

V

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:
He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

VI

"The ship was cheered, the harbor cleared,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.

The Mariner tells how the ship sailed southward with a good wind and fair weather till it reached the Line

VII

"The sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he!
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.

VIII

"Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon—"
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

The Wedding-Guest heareth the bridal music; but the Mariner continueth his tale

IX

The bride hath paced into the hall,
Red as a rose is she;
Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsy.

X

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
Yet he cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

XI

The ship drawn by storm toward the south pole

"And now the Storm-Blast came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong:
He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

XII

"With sloping masts and dipping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
And southward aye we fled.

XIII

"And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold:
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.

The land of ice, and of fearful sounds, where no living thing was to be seen

XIV

"And through the drifts the snowy clifts
Did send a dismal sheen:
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken—
The ice was all between.

XV

"The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around:
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound!

Till a great sea-bird, called the Albatross, came through the snow-fog, and was received with great joy and hospitality

XVI

"At length did cross an Albatross:
Thorough the fog it came;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name.

XVII

"It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
The helmsman steered us through!

And lo! the Albatross proveth a bird of good omen, and followeth the ship as it returned northward, through fog and floating ice

XVIII

"And a good south wind sprung up behind;
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariners' hollo!

XIX

"In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perched for vespers nine;
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white moon-shine."

XX

The ancient Mariner inhospitably killeth the pious bird of good omen

"God save thee, ancient Mariner!
From the fiends, that plague thee thus!—
Why look'st thou so?"—"With my cross-bow
I shot the Albatross."

PART THE SECOND

XXI

"The Sun now rose upon the right:
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea.

XXII

"And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day, for food or play,
Came to the mariners' hollo!

XXIII

His shipmates cry out against the ancient Mariner, for killing the bird of good luck

"And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe:
For all averred, I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
'Ah, wretch!' said they, 'the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow!'

XXIV

But when the fog cleared off, they justify the same, and thus make themselves accomplices in the crime

"Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
The glorious Sun uprist:
Then all averred, I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist.
''T was right,' said they, 'such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.'

The fair breeze continues; the ship enters the Pacific Ocean and sails northward, even till it reaches the Line

XXV

"The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free:
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

XXVI

The ship hath been suddenly becalmed

"Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'T was sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea!

XXVII

"All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

XXVIII

"Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

XXIX

And the Albatross begins to be avenged

"Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink.

XXX

"The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

XXXI

"About, about, in reel and rout
The death-fires danced at night;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue, and white.

XXXII

A spirit had followed them; one of the invisible inhabitants of this planet, neither departed souls nor angels; concerning whom the learned Jew Josephus, and the Platonic Constantinopolitan, Michael Psellus, may be consulted. They are very numerous, and there is no climate or element without one or more

"And some in dreams assured were
Of the spirit that plagued us so:
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.

XXXIII

"And every tongue, through utter drought,
Was withered at the root;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

XXXIV

The ship-mates in their sore distress would fain throw the whole guilt on the ancient Mariner; in sign whereof they hang the dead sea-bird round his neck

"Ah! well-a-day! what evil looks
Had I from old and young!
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.

PART THE THIRD

XXXV

"There passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time! a weary time!
How glazed each weary eye!
When looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.

The ancient Mariner beholdeth a sign in the element afar off

XXXVI

"At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist:
It moved, and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist.

XXXVII

"A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
And still it neared and neared:
As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged and tacked and veered.

At its nearer approach, it seemeth him to be a ship; and at a dear ransom he freeth his speech from the bonds of thirst

XXXVIII

"With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
We could nor laugh nor wail;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood!
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, A sail! a sail!

XXXIX

"With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
Agape they heard me call:
Gramercy! they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in,
As they were drinking all.

A flash of joy

XL

"See! see! (I cried) she tacks no more!
Hither to work us weal,—
Without a breeze, without a tide,
She steadies with upright keel!

And horror follows. For can it be a *ship* that comes onward without wind or tide?

XLI

"The western wave was all a-flame,
The day was well-nigh done!
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright Sun;
When that strange shape drove suddenly
Betwixt us and the Sun.

XLII

"And straight the Sun was flecked with bars,
(Heaven's Mother send us grace!)
As if through a dungeon-grate he peered,
With broad and burning face.

It seemeth him but the skeleton of a ship

XLIII

"Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat loud,)
How fast she nears and nears!
Are those *her* sails that glance in the Sun,
Like restless gossameres?

XLIV

And its ribs are seen as bars on the face of the setting Sun. The Specter-Woman and her Death-mate, and no other on board the skeleton ship

"Are those *her* ribs through which the Sun
Did peer, as through a grate?
And is that Woman all her crew?
Is that a Death? and are there two?
Is Death that Woman's mate?

XLV

Like vessel, like crew!

"Her lips were red, her looks were free,
Her locks were yellow as gold:
Her skin was as white as leprosy,
The Night-mare Life-in-Death was she,
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

Death and Life-in-Death have diced for the ship's crew, and she (the latter) winneth the ancient Mariner

XLVI

"The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice;
'The game is done! I've won! I've won!'
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

XLVII

No twilight within the courts of the Sun

"The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out:
At one stride comes the dark;
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
Off shot the specter-bark.

XLVIII

At the rising of the Moon.

"We listened and looked sideways up!
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip!
The stars were dim, and thick the night,
The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed white;
From the sails the dew did drip—
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The hornéd Moon, with one bright star
Within the nether tip.

XLIX

One after another,

"One after one, by the star-dogged Moon.
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye.

L

His shipmates drop down dead

"Four times fifty living men,
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan)
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one.

LI

But Life-in-Death begins her work on the ancient Mariner

"The souls did from their bodies fly.—
They fled to bliss or woe!
And every soul, it passed me by,
Like the whizz of my cross-bow!"

PART THE FOURTH

LII

The Wedding-Guest feareth that a Spirit is talking to him;

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

LIII

"I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand, so brown."—

But the ancient Mariner assureth him of his bodily life, and proceedeth to relate his horrible penance

"Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest!
This body dropt not down.

LIV

"Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

LV

He despiseth the creatures of the calm

"The many men, so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie:
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on; and so did I.

LVI

And envieth that they should live, and so many lie dead

"I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away:
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

LVII

"I looked to Heaven and tried to pray;
But or ever a prayer had gusht
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.

LVIII

"I closed my lids, and kept them close,
And the balls like pulses beat;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky
Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

LIX

But the curse liveth for him in the eye of the dead men

"The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they:
The look with which they looked on me
Had never passed away.

LX

"An orphan's curse would drag to Hell
A spirit from on high;
But oh! more horrible than that
Is a curse in a dead man's eye!
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.

LXI

In his loneliness and fixedness he yearneth towards the journeying Moon, and the stars that still sojourn, yet still move onward; and everywhere the blue sky belongs to them, and is their appointed rest and their native country and their own natural homes, which they enter unannounced, as lords that are certainly expected and yet there is a silent joy at their arrival

"The moving Moon went up the sky,
And nowhere did abide:
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside—

LXII

"Her beams bemocked the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charméd water burnt alway
A still and awful red.

LXIII

By the light of the Moon he beholdeth God's creatures of the great calm

"Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes:
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

LXIV

"Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

LXV

Their beauty and their happiness

"O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware!

He blesseth them in his heart

Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware!

LXVI

The spell begins to break

"The selfsame moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

PART THE FIFTH

LXVII

"Oh sleep! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
That slid into my soul.

LXVIII

By grace of the holy Mother, the ancient Mariner is refreshed with rain

"The silly buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew;
And when I awoke, it rained.

LXIX

"My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.

LXX

"I moved, and could not feel my limbs.
I was so light—almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blesséd ghost.

He heareth sounds, and seeth strange sights and commotions in the sky and the element

LXXI

"And soon I heard a roaring wind:
It did not come anear;
But with its sound it shook the sails
That were so thin and sere.

LXXII

"The upper air burst into life!
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
To and fro they were hurried about;
And to and fro, and in and out,
The wan stars danced between.

LXXIII

"And the coming wind did roar more loud,
And the sails did sigh like sedge;
And the rain poured down from one black cloud;
The Moon was at its edge.

LXXIV

"The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
The Moon was at its side:
Like waters shot from some high crag,
The lightning fell with never a jag,
A river steep and wide.

The bodies of the ship's crew are inspired, and the ship moves on

LXXV

"The loud wind never reached the ship,
Yet now the ship moved on!
Beneath the lightning and the Moon
The dead men gave a groan.

LXXVI

"They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes;
It had been strange, even in a dream,
To have seen those dead men rise.

LXXVII

"The helmsman steered, the ship moved on;
Yet never a breeze up-blew;
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
Where they were wont to do;
They raised their limbs like lifeless tools—
We were a ghastly crew.

LXXVIII

"The body of my brother's son
Stood by me, knee to knee:
The body and I pulled at one rope,
But he said naught to me."

But not by the souls of the men, nor by demons of earth or middle air, but by a blessed troop of angelic spirits, sent down by the invocation of the guardian saint

LXXIX

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!"
"Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest!
'T was not those souls that fled in pain,
Which to their corses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest:

LXXX

"For when it dawned—they dropped their arms
And clustered round the mast;
Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,
And from their bodies passed.

LXXXI

"Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the Sun;
Slowly the sounds came back again,
Now mixed, now one by one.

LXXXII

"Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
I heard the sky-lark sing;
Sometimes all little birds that are,
How they seemed to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning!

LXXXIII

"And now 't was like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the heavens be mute.

LXXXIV

"It ceased; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

LXXXV

"Till noon we quietly sailed on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe:
Slowly and smoothly went the ship
Moved onward from beneath.

The lonesome Spirit from the south-pole carries on the ship as far as the Line, in obedience to the angelic troop, but still requireth vengeance

LXXXVI

"Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid: and it was he
That made the ship to go.
The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

LXXXVII

"The sun, right up above the mast,
Had fixed her to the ocean:
But in a minute she 'gan stir,
With a short uneasy motion—
Backwards and forwards half her length
With a short uneasy motion.

LXXXVIII

"Then like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound;
It flung the blood into my head,
And I fell down in a swound.

LXXXIX

"How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare;
But ere my living life returned,
I heard and in my soul discerned
Two voices in the air.

The Polar Spirit's fellow-demons, the invisible inhabitants of the element, take part in his wrong; and two of them relate, one to the other that penance long and heavy for the ancient Mariner hath been accorded to the Polar Spirit, who returneth southward

XC

"'Is it he?' quoth one, 'Is this the man?
By him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid full low,
The harmless Albatross.

XCI

"'The spirit who bideth by himself
In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the man
Who shot him with his bow.'

XCII

"The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew:
Quoth he, 'The man hath penance done,
And penance more will do.'

PART THE SIXTH

XCIII

FIRST VOICE

"'But tell me, tell me! speak again,
Thy soft response renewing—
What makes that ship drive on so fast?
What is the Ocean doing?'

XCIV

SECOND VOICE

"'Still as a slave before his lord,
The Ocean hath no blast;
His great bright eye most silently
Up to the Moon is cast—

XCV

"'If he may know which way to go;
For she guides him smooth or grim
See, brother, see! how graciously
She looketh down on him.'

XCVI

The Mariner hath been cast into a trance; for the angelic power causeth the vessel to drive northward faster than human life could endure

FIRST VOICE

"'But why drives on that ship so fast
Without or wave or wind?'

SECOND VOICE

"'The air is cut away before,
And closes from behind.

XCVII

"'Fly, brother, fly! more high, more high!
Or we shall be belated:
For slow and slow that ship will go,
When the Mariner's trance is abated.'

The supernatural motion is retarded; the Mariner awakes, and his penance begins anew

XCVIII

"I woke, and we were sailing on
As in a gentle weather:
'T was night, calm night, the Moon was high;
The dead men stood together.

XCIX

"All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter:
All fixed on me their stony eyes
That in the Moon did glitter.

C

"The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never passed away:
I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
Nor turn them up to pray.

The curse is finally expiated

CI

"And now this spell was snapt: once more
I viewed the Ocean green,
And looked far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen—

CII

"Like one that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round, walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

CIII

"But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made:
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

CIV

"It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring—
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

CV

"Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sailed softly too:
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze—
On me alone it blew.

CVI

And the ancient Mariner beholdeth his native country

"Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed
The light-house top I see?
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?
Is this mine own countree?

CVII

"We drifted o'er the harbor-bar,
And I with sobs did pray—
'O let me be awake, my God!
Or let me sleep alway.'

CVIII

"The harbor-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn!
And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the Moon.

CIX

"The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
That stands above the rock:
The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.

CX

The angelic spirits leave the dead bodies,

"And the bay was white with silent light,
Till rising from the same,
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colors came.

CXI

"A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were:
I turned my eyes upon the deck—
Oh, Christ! what saw I there!

CXII

And appear in their own forms of light

"Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
And, by the holy rood!
A man all light, a seraph-man,
On every corse there stood.

CXIII

"This seraph-band, each waved his hand:
It was a heavenly sight!
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light;

CXIV

"This seraph-band, each waved his hand;
No voice did they impart—
No voice; but oh! the silence sank
Like music on my heart.

CXV

"But soon I heard the dash of oars,
I heard the Pilot's cheer;
My head was turned perforce away,
And I saw a boat appear.

CXVI

"The Pilot, and the Pilot's boy
I heard them coming fast:
Dear Lord in Heaven! it was a joy
The dead men could not blast.

CXVII

"I saw a third—I heard his voice:
It is the Hermit good!
He singeth loud his godly hymns
That he makes in the wood.
He 'll shrieve my soul, he 'll wash away
The Albatross's blood.

PART THE SEVENTH

CXVIII

The Hermit of the wood

"This Hermit good lives in that wood
Which slopes down to the sea:
How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
He loves to talk with marineres
That come from a far countree.

CXIX

"He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve—
He hath a cushion plump:
It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak-stump.

CXX

"The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk,
'Why this is strange, I trow!
Where are those lights so many and fair,
That signal made but now?'

CXXI

Approacheth the ship with wonder

"'Strange, by my faith!' the Hermit said—
'And they answered not our cheer!
The planks look warped! and see those sails
How thin they are and sere!
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were

CXXII

"'Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along;
When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,
And the owlet whoops to the wolf below
That eats the she-wolf's young.'

CXXIII

"'Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look'—
(The Pilot made reply)
'I am a-feared'—'Push on, push on!'
Said the Hermit cheerily.

CXXIV

"The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirred;
The boat came close beneath the ship,
And straight a sound was heard.

CXXV

The ship suddenly sinketh

"Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread:
It reached the ship, it split the bay;
The ship went down like lead.

CXXVI

The ancient Mariner is saved in the Pilot's boat

"Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound,
Which sky and ocean smote,
Like one that hath been seven days drowned
My body lay afloat;
But swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the Pilot's boat.

CXXVII

"Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,
The boat spun round and round:
And all was still, save that the hill
Was telling of the sound.

CXXVIII

"I moved my lips—the Pilot shrieked
And fell down in a fit;
The Holy Hermit raised his eyes
And prayed where he did sit.

CXXIX

"I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laughed loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro.
'Ha! ha!' quoth he, 'full plain I see,
The Devil knows how to row.'

CXXX

"And now, all in my own countree,
I stood on the firm land!
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

CXXXI

The ancient Mariner earnestly entreateth the Hermit to shrieve him; and the penance of life falls on him

"'O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!'
The Hermit crossed his brow.
'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid thee say—
What manner of man art thou?'

CXXXII

"Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale:
And then it left me free.

And ever and anon throughout his future life an agony constraineth him to travel from land to land

CXXXIII

"Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns;
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.

CXXXIV

"I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach.

CXXXV

"What loud uproar bursts from that door!
The Wedding-Guests are there:
But in the garden-bower the bride
And bride-maids singing are;
And hark the little vesper bell,
Which biddeth me to prayer!

CXXXVI

"O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide wide sea:
So lonely 't was, that God himself
Scarce seemed there to be.

CXXXVII

"O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
'T is sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company!—

CXXXVIII

"To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
And youths and maidens gay!

And to teach, by his own example, love and reverence to all things that God made and loveth

CXXXIX

"Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

CXL

"He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

CXLI

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone: and now the Wedding-Guest
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

CXLII

He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn:
A sadder and a wiser man,
He rose the morrow morn.

LOVE

All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
All are but ministers of Love,
And feed his sacred flame.

Oft in my waking dreams do I
Live o'er again that happy hour,
When midway on the mount I lay,
Beside the ruin'd tower.

The moonshine stealing o'er the scene
Had blended with the lights of eve;
And she was there, my hope, my joy,
My own dear Genevieve!

She lean'd against the arméd man,
The statue of the arméd knight;
She stood and listen'd to my lay,
Amid the lingering light.

Few sorrows hath she of her own,
My hope! my joy! my Genevieve!
She loves me best, whene'er I sing
The songs that make her grieve.

I play'd a soft and doleful air,
I sang an old and moving story—
An old rude song, that suited well
That ruin wild and hoary.

She listen'd with a flitting blush,
With downcast eyes and modest grace;
For well she knew, I could not choose
But gaze upon her face.

I told her of the Knight that wore
Upon his shield a burning brand;
And that for ten long years he woo'd
The Lady of the Land.

I told her how he pined: and ah!
The deep, the low, the pleading tone
With which I sang another's love
Interpreted my own.

She listen'd with a flitting blush,
With downcast eyes, and modest grace;
And she forgave me, that I gazed
Too fondly on her face!

But when I told the cruel scorn
That crazed that bold and lovely Knight,
And that he cross'd the mountain-woods,
Nor rested day nor night;

That sometimes from the savage den,
And sometimes from the darksome shade,
And sometimes starting up at once
In green and sunny glade,—

There came and look'd him in the face
An angel beautiful and bright;
And that he knew it was a Fiend.
This miserable Knight!

And that unknowing what he did,
He leap'd amid a murderous band,
And saved from outrage worse than death
The Lady of the Land;—

And how she wept, and clasp'd his knees;
And how she tended him in vain—
And ever strove to expiate
The scorn that crazed his brain;—

And that she nursed him in a cave,
And how his madness went away,
When on the yellow forest-leaves
A dying man he lay;—

His dying words—but when I reach'd
That tenderest strain of all the ditty,
My faltering voice and pausing harp
Disturb'd her soul with pity!

All impulses of soul and sense
Had thrill'd my guileless Genevieve;
The music and the doleful tale,
The rich and balmy eve;

And hopes, and fears that kindle hope,
An undistinguishable throng,
And gentle wishes long subdued,
Subdued and cherish'd long!

She wept with pity and delight,
She blush'd with love, and virgin shame;
And like the murmur of a dream,
I heard her breathe my name.

Her bosom heaved—she stepp'd aside,
As conscious of my look she stept—
Then suddenly, with timorous eye
She fled to me and wept.

She half inclosed me with her arms,
She press'd me with a meek embrace;
And bending back her head, look'd up,
And gazed upon my face.

'T was partly love, and partly fear,
And partly 't was a bashful art
That I might rather feel, than see,
The swelling of her heart.

I calm'd her fears, and she was calm,
And told her love with virgin pride;
And so I won my Genevieve,
My bright and beauteous Bride.

YOUTH AND AGE

Verse, a breeze 'mid blossoms straying,
Where Hope clung feeding, like a bee—
Both were mine! Life went a-maying
With Nature, Hope, and Poesy,
When I was young!
When I was young?—Ah, woful When!
Ah! for the change 'twixt Now and Then!
This breathing house not built with hands,
This body that does me grievous wrong,
O'er aery cliffs and glittering sands
How lightly then it flash'd along:
Like those trim skiffs, unknown of yore,
On winding lakes and rivers wide,
That ask no aid of sail or oar,
That fear no spite of wind or tide!
Nought cared this body for wind or weather
When youth and I lived in 't together.

Flowers are lovely; Love is flower-like;
Friendship is a sheltering tree;
O! the joys, that came down shower-like,
Of Friendship, Love, and Liberty,
Ere I was old!
Ere I was old? Ah woful Ere,
Which tells me, Youth 's no longer here!
O Youth! for years so many and sweet,
'T is known that Thou and I were one,
I 'll think it but a fond conceit—
It cannot be, that Thou art gone!
Thy vesper-bell hath not yet toll'd:—
And thou wert aye a masker bold!
What strange disguise hast now put on
To make believe that Thou art gone?
I see these locks in silvery slips,
This drooping gait, this alter'd size:
But Springtide blossoms on thy lips,
And tears take sunshine from thine eyes!
Life is but Thought: so think I will
That Youth and I are house-mates still.
Dew-drops are the gems of morning,
But the tears of mournful eve!
Where no hope is, life 's a warning
That only serves to make us grieve
When we are old:
—That only serves to make us grieve
With oft and tedious taking-leave,
Like some poor nigh-related guest
That may not rudely be dismist,
Yet hath out-stay'd his welcome while,
And tells the jest without the smile.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Percy Bysshe Shelley
After the portrait by Miss Curran

POEMS OF SHELLEY

OZYMANDIAS OF EGYPT

I MET a traveler from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand,
Half sunk, a shatter'd visage lies, whose frown
And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamp'd on these lifeless things,
The hand that mock'd them and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal these words appear:
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

STANZAS WRITTEN IN DEJECTION NEAR NAPLES

THE sun is warm, the sky is clear,
The waves are dancing fast and bright,
Blue isles and snowy mountains wear
The purple noon's transparent might:
The breath of the moist earth is light
Around its unexpanded buds;
Like many a voice of one delight—
The winds', the birds', the ocean-floods'—
The city's voice itself is soft like Solitude's.

I see the deep's untrampled floor
With green and purple sea-weeds strown;
I see the waves upon the shore
Like light dissolved in star-showers thrown:
I sit upon the sands alone;
The lightning of the noon-tide ocean
Is flashing round me, and a tone
Arises from its measured motion—
How sweet! did any heart now share in my emotion.

Alas! I have nor hope nor health,
Nor peace within nor calm around,
Nor that content, surpassing wealth,
The sage in meditation found,
And walk'd with inward glory crown'd—
Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure;
Others I see whom these surround—
Smiling they live, and call life pleasure;
To me that cup has been dealt in another measure.

Yet now despair itself is mild
Even as the winds and waters are;
I could lie down like a tired child,
And weep away the life of care
Which I have borne, and yet must bear,—
Till death like sleep might steal on me,
And I might feel in the warm air
My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea
Breathe o'er my dying brain its last monotony.

LINES WRITTEN AMONG THE EUGANEAN HILLS

MANY a green isle needs must be
In the deep wide sea of Misery,
Or the mariner, worn and wan,
Never thus could voyage on
Day and night, and night and day,
Drifting on his dreary way,
With the solid darkness black
Closing round his vessel's track;
Whilst above, the sunless sky
Big with clouds, hangs heavily,
And behind the tempest fleet
Hurries on with lightning feet,
Riving sail, and cord, and plank,
Till the ship has almost drank
Death from the o'er-brimming deep;
And sinks down, down, like that sleep
When the dreamer seems to be
Weltering through eternity;
And the dim low line before
Of a dark and distant shore
Still recedes, as ever still
Longing with divided will,
But no power to seek or shun,
He is ever drifted on
O'er the unreposing wave,
To the haven of the grave.

Ah, many flowering islands lie
In the waters of wide Agony:
To such a one this morn was led
My bark, by soft winds piloted.
—'Mid the mountains Euganean
I stood listening to the paean

With which the legion'd rooks did hail
The Sun's uprise majestical:
Gathering round with wings all hoar,
Through the dewy mist they soar
Like gray shades, till the eastern heaven
Bursts; and then,—as clouds of even
Fleck'd with fire and azure, lie
In the unfathomable sky,—
So their plumes of purple grain
Starr'd with drops of golden rain
Gleam above the sunlight woods,
As in silent multitudes
On the morning's fitful gale
Through the broken mist they sail;
And the vapors cloven and gleaming
Follow down the dark steep streaming,
Till all is bright, and clear, and still
Round the solitary hill.

Beneath is spread like a green sea
The waveless plain of Lombardy,
Bounded by the vaporous air,
Islanded by cities fair;
Underneath Day's azure eyes,
Ocean's nursling, Venice lies,—
A peopled labyrinth of walls,
Amphitrite's destined halls,
Which her hoary sire now paves
With his blue and beaming waves.
Lo! the sun upsprings behind,
Broad, red, radiant, half-reclined
On the level quivering line
Of the waters crystalline;
And before that chasm of light,
As within a furnace bright,
Column, tower, and dome, and spire,

Shine like obelisks of fire,
Pointing with inconstant motion
From the altar of dark ocean
To the sapphire-tinted skies;
As the flames of sacrifice
From the marble shrines did rise
As to pierce the dome of gold
Where Apollo spoke of old.

Sun-girt City! thou hast been
Ocean's child, and then his queen;
Now is come a darker day,
And thou soon must be his prey,
If the power that raised thee here
Hallow so thy watery bier.
A less drear ruin then than now,
With thy conquest-branded brow
Stooping to the slave of slaves
From thy throne among the waves
Wilt thou be,—when the sea-mew
Flies, as once before it flew,
O'er thine isles depopulate,
And all is in its ancient state,
Save where many a palace-gate
With green sea-flowers overgrown
Like a rock of ocean's own,
Topples o'er the abandon'd sea
As the tides change sullenly.
The fisher on his watery way
Wandering at the close of day,
Will spread his sail and seize his oar
Till he pass the gloomy shore,
Lest thy dead should, from their sleep,
Bursting o'er the starlight deep,
Lead a rapid masque of death
O'er the waters of his path.

Noon descends around me now:
'T is the noon of autumn's glow,
When a soft and purple mist
Like a vaporous amethyst,
Or an air-dissolvéd star
Mingling light and fragrance, far
From the curved horizon's bound
To the point of heaven's profound,
Fills the overflowing sky;
And the plains that silent lie
Underneath; the leaves unsodden
Where the infant Frost has trodden
With his morning-wingéd feet
Whose bright print is gleaming yet;
And the red and golden vines
Piercing with their trellised lines
The rough, dark-skirted wilderness;
The dun and bladed grass no less,
Pointing from this hoary tower
In the windless air; the flower
Glimmering at my feet; the line
Of the olive-sandall'd Apennine
In the south dimly islanded;
And the Alps, whose snows are spread
High between the clouds and sun;
And of living things each one;
And my spirit, which so long
Darken'd this swift stream of song,—
Interpenetrated lie
By the glory of the sky;
Be it love, light, harmony,
Odor, or the soul of all
Which from heaven like dew doth fall,
Or the mind which feeds this verse,
Peopling the lone universe.

Noon descends, and after noon
Autumn's evening meets me soon,
Leading the infantine moon
And that one star, which to her
Almost seems to minister
Half the crimson light she brings
From the sunset's radiant springs:
And the soft dreams of the morn
(Which like wingéd winds had borne
To that silent isle, which lies
'Mid remember'd agonies,
The frail bark of this lone being),
Pass, to other sufferers fleeing,
And its ancient pilot, Pain,
Sits beside the helm again.

Other flowering isles must be
In the sea of Life and Agony:
Other spirits float and flee
O'er that gulf: Ev'n now, perhaps,
On some rock the wild wave wraps,
With folded wings they waiting sit
For my bark, to pilot it
To some calm and blooming cove;
Where for me, and those I love,
May a windless bower be built,
Far from passion, pain, and guilt,
In a dell 'mid lawny hills
Which the wild sea-murmur fills,
And soft sunshine, and the sound
Of old forests echoing round,
And the light and smell divine
Of all flowers that breathe and shine.
—We may live so happy there,
That the Spirits of the Air
Envying us, may ev'n entice

To our healing paradise
The polluting multitude:
But their rage would be subdued
By that clime divine and calm,
And the winds whose wings rain balm
On the uplifted soul, and leaves
Under which the bright sea heaves;
While each breathless interval
In their whisperings musical
The inspired soul supplies
With its own deep melodies;
And the Love which heals all strife
Circling, like the breath of life,
All things in that sweet abode
With its own mild brotherhood:—
They, not it, would change; and soon
Every sprite beneath the moon
Would repent its envy vain,
And the Earth grow young again.

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

I

O WILD West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,
Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes! O thou
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed
The wingéd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow
Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odors plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and Preserver; Hear, oh hear!

II

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of heaven and ocean,
Angels of rain and lightning! there are spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head
Of some fierce Maenad, ev'n from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height—
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge
Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might
Of vapors, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail, will burst: Oh hear!

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer-dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lull'd by the coil of his crystalline streams,
Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,
All overgrown with azure moss, and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers
Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know
Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear
And tremble and despoil themselves: Oh hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share
The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than Thou, O uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be
The comrade of thy wanderings over heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
Scarce seem'd a vision,—I would ne'er have striven
As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh! lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!
A heavy weight of hours has chain'd and bow'd
One too like thee—tameless, and swift, and proud.

V

Make me thy lyre, ev'n as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies
Will take from both a deep autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! be thou me, impetuous one!
Drive my dead thoughts over the universe,
Like wither'd leaves, to quicken a new birth;
And, by the incantation of this verse,
Scatter, as from an unextinguish'd hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawaken'd earth
The trumpet of a prophecy! O wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

THE INDIAN SERENADE

I ARISE from dreams of Thee
In the first sweet sleep of night
When the winds are breathing low
And the stars are shining bright:
I arise from dreams of thee,
And a spirit in my feet
Hath led me—who knows how?
To thy chamber-window, Sweet!

The wandering airs they faint
On the dark, the silent stream—
The champak odors fail
Like sweet thoughts in a dream;
The nightingale's complaint
It dies upon her heart,
As I must die on thine
O belovéd as thou art!

Oh lift me from the grass!
I die, I faint, I fail!
Let thy love in kisses rain
On my lips and eyelids pale.
My cheek is cold and white, alas!
My heart beats loud and fast;
Oh! press it close to thine again
Where it will break at last.

LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY

The fountains mingle with the river
And the rivers with the ocean,
The winds of heaven mix for ever
With a sweet emotion;
Nothing in the world is single,
All things by a law divine
In one another's being mingle—
Why not I with thine?

See the mountains kiss high heaven,
And the waves clasp one another;
No sister-flower would be forgiven
If it disdain'd its brother:
And the sunlight clasps the earth,
And the moonbeams kiss the sea—
What are all these kissings worth,
If thou kiss not me?

A DREAM OF THE UNKNOWN

I dream'd that as I wander'd by the way
Bare Winter suddenly was changed to Spring,
And gentle odors led my steps astray,
Mix'd with a sound of waters murmuring
Along a shelving bank of turf, which lay
Under a copse, and hardly dared to fling
Its green arms round the bosom of the stream,
But kiss'd it and then fled, as Thou mightest in dream.

There grew pied wind-flowers and violets,
Daisies, those pearl'd Arcturi of the earth,
The constellated flower that never sets;
Faint oxlips; tender blue-bells, at whose birth

The sod scarce heaved; and that tall flower that wets
Its mother's face with heaven-collected tears,
When the low wind, its playmate's voice, it hears.

And in the warm hedge grew lush eglantine,
Green cow-bind and the moonlight-color'd May,
And cherry-blossoms, and white cups, whose wine
Was the bright dew yet drain'd not by the day;
And wild roses, and ivy serpentine
With its dark buds and leaves, wandering astray;
And flowers azure, black, and streak'd with gold,
Fairer than any waken'd eyes behold.

And nearer to the river's trembling edge
There grew broad flag-flowers, purple prank'd with white,
And starry river-buds among the sedge,
And floating water-lilies, broad and bright,
Which lit the oak that overhung the hedge
With moonlight beams of their own watery light;
And bulrushes, and reeds of such deep green
As soothed the dazzled eye with sober sheen.

Methought that of these visionary flowers
I made a nosegay, bound in such a way
That the same hues, which in their natural bowers
Were mingled or opposed, the like array
Kept these imprison'd children of the Hours
Within my hand,—and then, elate and gay,
I hasten'd to the spot whence I had come
That I might there present it—O! to Whom?

THE CLOUD

I BRING fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noonday dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet buds every one
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
As she dances about in the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
And their great pines groan aghast;
And all the night 't is my pillow white,
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers,
Lightning my pilot sits;
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,
It struggles and howls at fits;
Over earth and ocean with gentle motion,
This pilot is guiding me,
Lured by the love of the genii that move
In the depths of the purple sea;
Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,
Over the lakes and the plains,
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
The Spirit he loves remains;
And I all the while bask in heaven's blue smile,
Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

The sanguine sunrise with his meteor eyes,
And his burning plumes outspread,

Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
When the morning star shines dead,
As on the jag of a mountain crag,
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit one moment may sit
In the light of its golden wings.
And when sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,
Its ardors of rest and love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

That orbéd maiden with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I blind the sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the moon's with a girdle of pearl;
The volcanoes are dim and the stars reel and swim,
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,
The mountains its columns be.

The triumphal arch through which I march
With hurricane, fire, and snow,
When the powers of the air are chained to my chair,
Is the million-colored bow;
The sphere-fire above its soft colors wove
Whilst the moist earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of earth and water,
And the nursling of the sky;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;
I change, but I cannot die.
For after the rain, when with never a stain,
The pavilion of heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams,
Build up the blue dome of air,
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again.

TO A SKYLARK

Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven, or near it
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest,
Like a cloud of fire,
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

Mary Augmaster.

1028

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun
O'er which clouds are brightening,
Thou dost float and run,
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of heaven
In the broad daylight
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight:

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear
Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is overflow'd.

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody;—

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower:

Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aerial hue
Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the view.

Like a rose embower'd
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflower'd,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-wingéd thieves.

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awaken'd flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass.

Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine:
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus hymeneal
Or triumphal chaunt
Match'd with thine, would be all
But an empty vaunt—
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be:
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee:
Thou lovest; but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not:
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn
Hate, and pride, and fear;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,
The world should listen then, as I am listening now!

A SONG

I FEAR thy kisses, gentle maiden;
Thou needest not fear mine;
My spirit is too deeply laden
Ever to burthen thine.

I fear thy mien, thy tones, thy motion;
Thou needest not fear mine;
Innocent is the heart's devotion
With which I worship thine.

TO THE NIGHT

SWIFTLY walk over the western wave,
Spirit of Night!
Out of the misty eastern cave
Where, all the long and lone daylight,
Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear
Which make thee terrible and dear,—
Swift be thy flight!

Wrap thy form in a mantle gray
Star-inwrought;
Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day,
Kiss her until she be wearied out:
Then wander o'er city and sea and land,
Touching all with thine opiate wand—
Come, long-sought!

When I arose and saw the dawn,
I sigh'd for thee;
When light rode high, and the dew was gone,
And noon lay heavy on flower and tree,
And the weary Day turn'd to his rest
Lingering like an unloved guest,
I sigh'd for thee.

Thy brother Death came, and cried
Wouldst thou me?
Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,
Murmur'd like a noon-tide bee
Shall I nestle near thy side?
Wouldst thou me?—And I replied
No, not thee!

Death will come when thou art dead,
Soon, too soon—
Sleep will come when thou art fled;
Of neither would I ask the boon
I ask of thee, belovéd Night—
Swift be thine approaching flight,
Come soon, soon!

TO THE MOON

Art thou pale for weariness
Of climbing heaven, and gazing on the earth,
Wandering companionless
Among the stars that have a different birth,—
And ever-changing, like a joyless eye
That finds no object worth its constancy?

MUSIC, WHEN SOFT VOICES DIE

Music, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory—
Odors, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they quicken.

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
Are heap'd for the beloved's bed;
And so thy thoughts, when Thou art gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.

ONE WORD IS TOO OFTEN PROFANED

One word is too often profaned
  For me to profane it,
One feeling too falsely disdain'd
  For thee to disdain it.
One hope is too like despair
  For prudence to smother,
And pity from thee more dear
  Than that from another.

I can give not what men call love;
  But wilt thou accept not
The worship the heart lifts above
  And the Heavens reject not:
The desire of the moth for the star,
  Of the night for the morrow,
The devotion to something afar
  From the sphere of our sorrow?

THE FLIGHT OF LOVE

When the lamp is shatter'd
The light in the dust lies dead—
When the cloud is scatter'd,
The rainbow's glory is shed.
When the lute is broken,
Sweet tones are remember'd not;
When the lips have spoken,
Loved accents are soon forgot.

As music and splendor
Survive not the lamp and the lute,
The heart's echoes render
No song when the spirit is mute—
No song but sad dirges,
Like the wind through a ruin'd cell,
Or the mournful surges
That ring the dead seaman's knell.

When hearts have once mingled,
Love first leaves the well-built nest;
The weak one is singled
To endure what it once possesst.
O Love! who bewailest
The frailty of all things here,
Why choose you the frailest
For your cradle, your home, and your bier?

Its passions will rock thee
As the storms rock the ravens on high;
Bright reason will mock thee
Like the sun from a wintry sky.

From thy nest every rafter
Will rot, and thine eagle home
Leave thee naked to laughter,
When leaves fall and cold winds come.

THRENOS

O WORLD! O Life! O Time!
On whose last steps I climb,
Trembling at that where I had stood before;
When will return the glory of your prime?
No more—Oh, never more!

Out of the day and night
A joy has taken flight:
Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar
Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight
No more—Oh, never more!

THE INVITATION

BEST and brightest, come away,—
Fairer far than this fair Day,
Which, like thee, to those in sorrow
Comes to bid a sweet good-morrow
To the rough year just awake
In its cradle on the brake.
The brightest hour of unborn Spring
Through the winter wandering,
Found, it seems, the halcyon morn
To hoar February born;
Bending from heaven, in azure mirth,
It kiss'd the forehead of the earth,

And smiled upon the silent sea,
And bade the frozen streams be free,
And waked to music all their fountains,
And breathed upon the frozen mountains,
And like a prophetess of May
Strew'd flowers upon the barren way,
Making the wintry world appear
Like one on whom thou smilest, dear.

Away, away, from men and towns,
To the wild wood and the downs—
To the silent wilderness
Where the soul need not repress
Its music, lest it should not find
An echo in another's mind,
While the touch of Nature's art
Harmonizes heart to heart.

Radiant Sister of the Day
Awake! arise! and come away!
To the wild woods and the plains,
To the pools where winter rains
Image all their roof of leaves,
Where the pine its garland weaves
Of sapless green, and ivy dun,
Round stems that never kiss the sun;
Where the lawns and pastures be
And the sandhills of the sea;
Where the melting hoar-frost wets
The daisy-star that never sets,
And wind-flowers and violets
Which yet join not scent to hue
Crown the pale year weak and new;
When the night is left behind
In the deep east, dim and blind,

And the blue noon is over us,
And the multitudinous
Billows murmur at our feet,
Where the earth and ocean meet,
And all things seem only one
In the universal Sun.

THE RECOLLECTION

Now the last day of many days
All beautiful and bright as thou,
The loveliest and the last, is dead:
Rise, Memory, and write its praise!
Up—to thy wonted work! come, trace
The epitaph of glory fled,
For now the earth has changed its face,
A frown is on the heaven's brow.

We wander'd to the Pine Forest
That skirts the Ocean's foam;
The lightest wind was in its nest,
The tempest in its home.
The whispering waves were half asleep,
The clouds were gone to play,
And on the bosom of the deep
The smile of heaven lay;
It seem'd as if the hour were one
Sent from beyond the skies
Which scatter'd from above the sun
A light of Paradise!

We paused amid the pines that stood
The giants of the waste,
Tortured by storms to shapes as rude
As serpents interlaced,—

And soothed by every azure breath
That under heaven is blown,
To harmonies and hues beneath,
As tender as its own:
Now all the tree-tops lay asleep
Like green waves on the sea,
As still as in the silent deep
The ocean-woods may be.

How calm it was!—The silence there
By such a chain was bound,
That even the busy woodpecker
Made stiller with her sound
The inviolable quietness;
The breath of peace we drew
With its soft motion made not less
The calm that round us grew.
There seem'd, from the remotest seat
Of the white mountain waste
To the soft flower beneath our feet,
A magic circle traced,—
A spirit interfused around,
A thrilling silent life;
To momentary peace it bound
Our mortal nature's strife;—
And still I felt the center of
The magic circle there
Was one fair form that fill'd with love
The lifeless atmosphere.

We paused beside the pools that lie
Under the forest bough;
Each seem'd as 't were a little sky
Gulf'd in a world below;
A firmanent of purple light
Which in the dark earth lay,

More boundless than the depth of night
And purer than the day—
In which the lovely forests grew
As in the upper air,
More perfect both in shade and hue
Than any spreading there.
There lay the glade and neighboring lawn,
And through the dark-green wood
The white sun twinkling like the dawn
Out of a speckled cloud.
Sweet views in which our world above
Can never well be seen
Were imaged in the water's love
Of that fair forest green:
And all was interfused beneath
With an Elysian glow,
An atmosphere without a breath,
A softer day below.
Like one beloved, the scene had lent
To the dark water's breast
Its every leaf and lineament
With more than truth exprest;
Until an envious wind crept by,
Like an unwelcome thought
Which from the mind's too faithful eye
Blots one dear image out.
—Though thou art ever fair and kind,
The forests ever green,
Less oft is peace in Shelley's mind
Than calm in waters seen!

The clearest echoes of the hills,
The softest notes of falling rills,
The melodies of birds and bees,
The murmuring of summer seas,
And pattering rain, and breathing dew,
And airs of evening; and it knew
That seldom-heard mysterious sound
Which, driven on its diurnal round,
As it floats through boundless day,
Our world enkindles on its way:
—All this it knows, but will not tell
To those who cannot question well
The Spirit that inhabits it;
It talks according to the wit
Of its companions; and no more
Is heard than has been felt before
By those who tempt it to betray
These secrets of an elder day.
But, sweetly as its answers will
Flatter hands of perfect skill,
It keeps its highest holiest tone
For our beloved Friend alone.

THE POET'S DREAM

On a Poet's lips I slept
Dreaming like a love-adept
In the sound his breathing kept;
Nor seeks nor finds he mortal blisses,
But feeds on the aërial kisses
Of shapes that haunt Thought's wildernesses.
He will watch from dawn to gloom
The lake-reflected sun illume
The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom,

Nor heed nor see what things they be—
But from these create he can
Forms more real than living Man,
Nurslings of Immortality!

A DIRGE

Rough wind, that moanest loud
Grief too sad for song;
Wild wind, when sullen cloud
Knells all the night long;
Sad storm whose tears are vain,
Bare woods whose branches stain,
Deep caves and dreary main,
Wail for the world's wrong!

JOHN KEATS

John Keats

POEMS OF KEATS

TO ONE WHO HAS BEEN LONG IN CITY PENT

To one who has been long in city pent,
'T is very sweet to look into the fair
And open face of heaven,—to breathe a prayer
Full in the smile of the blue firmanent.
Who is more happy, when, with heart's content,
Fatigued he sinks into some pleasant lair
Of wavy grass, and reads a debonair
And gentle tale of love and languishment?
Returning home at evening, with an ear
Catching the notes of Philomel,—an eye
Watching the sailing cloudlet's bright career,
He mourns that day so soon has glided by:
E'en like the passage of an angel's tear
That falls through the clear ether silently.

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER

Much have I travel'd in the realms of gold
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne:
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
—Then felt I like some watcher of the skies

When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez, when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific—and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

THE TERROR OF DEATH

When I have fears that I may cease to be
Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain,
Before high-piléd books, in charact'ry
Hold like rich garners the full-ripen'd grain;
When I behold, upon the night's starr'd face,
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
And think that I may never live to trace
Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance;
And when I feel, fair Creature of an hour!
That I shall never look upon thee more,
Never have relish in the faery power
Of unreflecting love—then on the shore
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
Till Love and Fame to nothingness do sink.

HAPPY INSENSIBILITY

In a drear-nighted December,
Too happy, happy tree,
Thy branches ne'er remember
Their green felicity:
The north cannot undo them
With a sleety whistle through them,
Nor frozen thawings glue them
From budding at the prime.

In a drear-nighted December,
Too happy, happy brook,
Thy bubblings ne'er remember
Apollo's summer look;
But with a sweet forgetting
They stay their crystal fretting,
Never, never petting
About the frozen time.

Ah! would 't were so with many
A gentle girl and boy!
But were there ever any
Writhed not at passéd joy?
To know the change and feel it,
When there is none to heal it
Nor numbéd sense to steal it—
Was never said in rhyme.

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

I

St. Agnes' Eve—Ah, bitter chill it was!
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;
The hare limp'd trembling through the frozen grass,
And silent was the flock in woolly fold:
Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while he told
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
Like pious incense from a censer old,
Seem'd taking flight for heaven, without a death,
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

II

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man;
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,
And back returneth, meager, barefoot, wan,

Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees:
The sculptur'd dead, on each side, seem to freeze,
Emprison'd in black, purgatorial rails:
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,
He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

III

Northward he turneth through a little door,
And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue
Flatter'd to tears this agéd man and poor;
But no—already had his deathbell rung;
The joys of all his life were said and sung;
His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve:
Another way he went, and soon among
Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,
And all night kept awake, for sinner's sake to grieve.

IV

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft;
And so it chanc'd, for many a door was wide,
From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft,
The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide:
The level chambers, ready with their pride,
Were glowing to receive a thousand guests:
The carvéd angels, ever eager-eyed,
Stared, where upon their heads the cornice rests,
With hair blown back, and wings put cross-wise on their breasts.

V

At length burst in the argent revelry,
With plume, tiara, and all rich array,
Numerous as shadows haunting fairly
The brain, new-stuff'd, in youth, with triumphs gay
Of old romance. These let us wish away,

And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,
Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,
On love, and wing'd St. Agnes' saintly care,
As she had heard old dames full many times declare.

VI

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,
Young virgins might have visions of delight,
And soft adorings from their loves receive
Upon the honey'd middle of the night,
If ceremonies due they did aright;
As, supperless to bed they must retire,
And couch supine their beauties, lily white;
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

VII

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline:
The music, yearning like a God in pain,
She scarcely heard: her maiden eyes divine,
Fix'd on the floor, saw many a sweeping train
Pass by—she heeded not at all: in vain
Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,
And back retir'd; not cool'd by high disdain,
But she saw not: her heart was otherwhere:
She sigh'd for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

VIII

She danc'd along with vague, regardless eyes,
Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short:
The hallow'd hour was near at hand: she sighs
Amid the timbrels, and the throng'd resort
Of whisperers in anger, or in sport;
'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,
Hoodwink'd with faery fancy; all amort,
Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,
And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

IX

So, purposing each moment to retire,
She linger'd still. Meantime, across the moors,
Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire
For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,
Buttress'd from moonlight, stands he, and implores
All saints to give him sight of Madeline,
But for one moment in the tedious hours,
That he might gaze and worship all unseen;
Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—in sooth such things have been.

X

He ventures in: let no buzz'd whisper tell:
All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords
Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous citadel:
For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes,
Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,
Whose very dogs would execrations howl
Against his lineage: not one breast affords
Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,
Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul.

XI

Ah, happy chance! the agéd creature came,
Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,
To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,
Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond
The sound of merriment and chorus bland:
He startled her; but soon she knew his face,
And grasp'd his fingers in her palsied hand,
Saying, "Mercy, Porphyro! hie thee from this place;
They are all here to-night, the whole blood-thirsty race!

XII

"Get hence! get hence! there 's dwarfish Hildebrand;
He had a fever late, and in the fit

He curséd thee and thine, both house and land:
Then there 's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit
More tame for his gray hairs—Alas me! flit!
Flit like a ghost away."—"Ah, Gossip dear,
We 're safe enough; here in this arm-chair sit,
And tell me how"—"Good Saints; not here, not here:
Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier."

XIII

He follow'd through a lowly archéd way,
Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume;
And as she mutter'd "Well-a—well-a-day!"
He found him in a little moonlight room,
Pale, latticed, chill, and silent as a tomb.
"Now tell me where is Madeline," said he,
"O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom
Which none but secret sisterhood may see,
When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving piously."

XIV

"St. Agnes! Ah! it is St. Agnes' Eve—
Yet men will murder upon holy days;
Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,
And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays,
To venture so: it fills me with amaze
To see thee, Porphyro!—St. Agnes' Eve!
God's help! my lady fair the conjuror plays
This very night: good angels her deceive!
But let me laugh awhile, I 've mickle time to grieve."

XV

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,
While Porphyro upon her face doth look,
Like puzzled urchin on an agéd crone
Who keepeth closed a wond'rous riddle-book,

As spectacled she sits in chimney nook.
But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told
His lady's purpose; and he scarce could brook
Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,
And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

XVI

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,
Flushing his brow, and in his painéd heart
Made purple riot: then doth he propose
A stratagem that makes the beldame start:
"A cruel man and impious thou art:
Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, and dream
Alone with her good angels, far apart
From wicked men like thee. Go, go!—I deem
Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem."

XVII

"I will not harm her, by all saints I swear,"
Quoth Porphyro: "O may I ne'er find grace
When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,
If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
Or look with ruffian passion in her face:
Good Angela, believe me by these tears;
Or I will, even in a moment's space,
Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears,
And beard them, though they be more fang'd than wolves and bears."

XVIII

"Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul?
A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, churchyard thing,
Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll;
Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,
Were never miss'd."—Thus plaining, doth she bring

A gentler speech from burning Porphyro;
So woful, and of such deep sorrowing,
That Angela gives promise she will do
Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

XIX

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,
Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide
Him in a closet, of such privacy
That he might see her beauty unespied,
And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,
While legion'd fairies paced the coverlet,
And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.
Never on such a night have lovers met,
Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

XX

"It shall be as thou wishest," said the Dame:
"All cates and dainties shall be storéd there
Quickly on this feast-night: by the tambour frame
Her own lute thou wilt see: no time to spare,
For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare
On such a catering trust my dizzy head.
Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel in prayer
The while: Ah! thou must needs the lady wed,
Or may I never leave my grave among the dead."

XXI

So saying, she hobbled off with busy fear.
The lover's endless minutes slowly pass'd;
The dame return'd, and whisper'd in his ear
To follow her; with agéd eyes aghast
From fright of dim espial. Safe at last,
Through many a dusky gallery, they gain
The maiden's chamber, silken, hush'd, and chaste;
Where Porphyro took covert, pleas'd amain.
His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

XXII

Her falt'ring hand upon the balustrade,
Old Angela was feeling for the stair,
When Madeline, St. Agnes' charméd maid,
Rose, like a mission'd spirit, unaware:
With silver taper's light, and pious care,
She turn'd, and down the agéd gossip led
To a safe level matting. Now prepare,
Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed;
She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove fray'd and fled.

XXIII

Out went the taper as she hurried in;
Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died:
She closed the door, she panted, all akin
To spirits of the air, and visions wide:
No utter'd syllable, or, woe betide!
But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
Paining with eloquence her balmy side;
As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.

XXIV

A casement high and triple-arch'd there was,
All garlanded with carven imag'ries
Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,
And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
As are the tiger-moth's deep-damask'd wings;
And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens and kings.

XXV

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast.

As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon;
Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,
And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
And on her hair a glory, like a saint:
She seem'd a splendid angel, newly drest,
Save wings, for heaven:—Porphyro grew faint:
She knelt so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

XXVI

Anon his heart revives: her vespers done,
Of all its wreathéd pearls her hair she frees,
Unclasps her warméd jewels one by one,
Loosens her fragrant bodice; by degrees
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees:
Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,
Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,
In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

XXVII

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,
In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex'd she lay,
Until the poppied warmth of sleep oppress'd
Her soothéd limbs, and soul fatigued away;
Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day,
Blissfully haven'd both from joy and pain,
Clasp'd like a missal where swart Paynims pray,
Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

XXVIII

Stol'n to this paradise, and so entranced,
Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,
And listen'd to her breathing, if it chanced
To wake into a slumberous tenderness;
Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,

And breath'd himself: then from the closet crept,
Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness,
And over the hush'd carpet, silent, stept,
And 'tween the curtains peep'd, where, lo!—how fast she slept.

XXIX

Then by the bed-side, where the faded moon
Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set
A table, and, half anguish'd, threw thereon
A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet:—
O for some drowsy Morphean amulet!
The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarionet,
Affray his ears, though but in dying tone:—
The hall door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

XXX

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
In blanchéd linen, smooth, and lavender'd,
While he from forth the closet brought a heap
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd,
With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
And lucent syrops, tinct with cinnamon,
Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd
From Fez, and spicéd dainties, every one,
From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon.

XXXI

These delicates he heap'd with glowing hand
On golden dishes and in baskets bright
Of wreathéd silver: sumptuous they stand
In the retiréd quiet of the night,
Filling the chilly room with perfume light.—
"And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!
Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite:
Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes' sake,
Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache."

XXXII

Thus whispering, his warm, unnervéd arm
Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream
By the dusk curtains:—'t was a midnight charm
Impossible to melt as icéd stream:
The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam;
Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies:
It seem'd he never, never could redeem
From such a steadfast spell his lady's eyes;
So mus'd awhile, entoil'd in wooféd phantasies.

XXXIII

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute,—
Tumultuous,—and, in chords that tenderest be,
He play'd an ancient ditty, long since mute,
In Provence call'd "La belle dame sans mercy:"
Close to her ear touching the melody;—
Wherewith disturb'd, she utter'd a soft moan:
He ceased—she panted quick—and suddenly
Her blue affrayéd eyes wide open shone:
Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured stone.

XXXIV

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,
Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep:
There was a painful change, that night expell'd
The blisses of her dream so pure and deep;
At which fair Madeline began to weep,
And moan forth witless words with many a sigh;
While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep;
Who knelt, with joinéd hands and piteous eye,
Fearing to move or speak, she look'd so dreamingly.

XXXV

"Ah, Porphyro!" said she, "but even now
Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,

Made tuneable with every sweetest vow;
And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear:
How changed thou art! how pallid, chill, and drear!
Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,
Those looks immortal, those complainings dear!
Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,
For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where to go."

XXXVI

Beyond a mortal man impassion'd far
At these voluptuous accents, he arose,
Ethereal, flush'd, and like a throbbing star
Seen mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose;
Into her dream he melted, as the rose
Blendeth its odor with the violet,—
Solution sweet: meantime the frost-wind blows
Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet
Against the window-panes; St. Agnes' moon hath set.

Compare
Compare

XXXVII

'T is dark: quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet:
"This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline!"
'T is dark: the icéd gusts still rave and beat:
"No dream, alas! alas! and woe is mine!
Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine.—
Cruel! what traitor could thee hither bring?
I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,
Though thou forsakest a deceivéd thing—
A dove forlorn and lost with sick unprunéd wing."

XXXVIII

"My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely bride!
Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest?
Thy beauty's shield, heart-shaped and vermeil dyed?
Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest
After so many hours of toil and quest,

A famish'd pilgrim,—saved by miracle.
Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest
Saving of thy sweet self; if thou think'st well
To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

XXXIX

"Hark! 't is an elfin storm from faery land,
Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed:
Arise—arise! the morning is at hand;—
The bloated wassailers will never heed:—
Let us away, my love, with happy speed;
There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see,—
Drown'd all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead:
Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be,
For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee."

XL

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,
For there were sleeping dragons all around,
At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears;
Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found;
In all the house was heard no human sound.
A chain-droop'd lamp was flickering by each door;
The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, and hound,
Flutter'd in the besieging wind's uproar;
And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor.

XLI

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall;
Like phantoms to the iron porch they glide,
Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,
With a huge empty flagon by his side:
The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide,
But his sagacious eye an inmate owns:
By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide:—
The chains lie silent on the footworn stones;
The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.

XLII

And they are gone: ay, ages long ago
These lovers fled away into the storm.
That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,
And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form
Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,
Were long be-nightmared. Angela the old
Died palsy-twitch'd, with meager face deform;
The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,
For aye unsought-for slept among his ashes cold.

THE HUMAN SEASONS

Four Seasons fill the measure of the year;
There are four seasons in the mind of man:
He has his lusty Spring, when fancy clear
Takes in all beauty with an easy span:
He has his Summer, when luxuriously
Spring's honey'd cud of youthful thought he loves
To ruminate, and by such dreaming high
Is nearest unto heaven: quiet coves
His soul has in its Autumn, when his wings
He furleth close; contented so to look
On mists in idleness—to let fair things
Pass by unheeded as a threshold brook.
He has his Winter too of pale misfeature,
Or else he would forego his mortal nature.

THE MERMAID TAVERN

Souls of Poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?

Have ye tippled drink more fine
Than mine host's Canary wine?
Or are fruits of Paradise
Sweeter than those dainty pies
Of venison? O generous food!
Drest as though bold Robin Hood
Would, with his Maid Marian,
Sup and bowse from horn and can.

I have heard that on a day
Mine host's sign-board flew away
Nobody knew whither, till
An astrologer's old quill
To a sheepskin gave the story,
Said he saw you in your glory,
Underneath a new-old sign
Sipping beverage divine,
And pledging with contented smack
The Mermaid in the Zodiac.

Souls of Poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?

THE REALM OF FANCY

Ever let the Fancy roam;
Pleasure never is at home:
At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth,
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth;
Then let wingéd Fancy wander
Through the thought still spread beyond her:
Open wide the mind's cage-door,
She 'll dart forth, and cloudward soar.

O sweet Fancy! let her loose;
Summer's joys are spoilt by use,
And the enjoying of the Spring
Fades as does its blossoming;
Autumn's red-lipp'd fruitage too,
Blushing through the mist and dew,
Cloys with tasting: What do then?
Sit thee by the ingle, when
The sear faggot blazes bright,
Spirit of a winter's night;
When the soundless earth is muffled,
And the cakéd snow is shuffled
From the ploughboy's heavy shoon:
When the Night doth meet the Noon
In a dark conspiracy
To banish Even from her sky.
Sit thee there, and send abroad,
With a mind self-overaw'd,
Fancy, high-commission'd:—send her!
She has vassals to attend her:
She will bring, in spite of frost,
Beauties that the earth hath lost;
She will bring thee, all together
All delights of summer weather;
All the buds and bells of May,
From dewy sward or thorny spray;
All the heapéd Autumn's wealth,
With a still, mysterious stealth:
She will mix these pleasures up
Like three fit wines in a cup,
And thou shalt quaff it:—thou shalt hear
Distant harvest-carols clear;
Rustle of the reapéd corn;
Sweet birds antheming the morn:
And, in the same moment—hark!
'T is the early April lark,

Or the rooks, with busy caw,
Foraging for sticks and straw.
Thou shalt, at one glance, behold
The daisy and the marigold;
White-plumed lilies, and the first
Hedge-grown primrose that hath burst;
Shaded hyacinth, alway
Sapphire queen of the mid-May;
And every leaf, and every flower
Pearléd with the self-same shower.
Thou shalt see the field-mouse peep
Meager from its celléd sleep;
And the snake all winter-thin
Cast on sunny bank its skin;
Freckled nest-eggs thou shalt see
Hatching in the hawthorn-tree,
When the hen-bird's wing doth rest
Quiet on her mossy nest;
Then the hurry and alarm
When the bee-hive casts its swarm,
Acorns ripe down-pattering,
While the autumn breezes sing,
  Oh, sweet Fancy! let her loose;
Everything is spoilt by use:
Where 's the cheek that doth not fade,
Too much gazed at? Where 's the maid
Whose lip mature is ever new?
Where 's the eye, however blue,
Doth not weary? Where 's the face
One would meet in every place?
Where 's the voice, however soft,
One would hear so very oft?
At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth.
Let then wingéd Fancy find
Thee a mistress to thy mind:

Dulcet-eyed as Ceres' daughter,
Ere the God of Torment taught her
How to frown and how to chide;
With a waist and with a side
White as Hebe's, when her zone
Slipt its golden clasp, and down
Fell her kirtle to her feet,
While she held the goblet sweet,
And Jove grew languid.—Break the mesh
Of the Fancy's silken leash;
Quickly break her prison-string,
And such joys as these she 'll bring.
—Let the wingéd Fancy roam,
Pleasure never is at home.

ODE ON THE POETS

Bards of Passion and of Mirth
Ye have left your souls on earth!
Have ye souls in heaven too,
Double-lived in regions new?
—Yes, and those of heaven commune
With the spheres of sun and moon;
With the noise of fountains wond'rous
And the parle of voices thund'rous;
With the whisper of heaven's trees
And one another, in soft ease
Seated on Elysian lawns
Browsed by none but Dian's fawns;
Underneath large blue-bells tented,
Where the daisies are rose-scented,
And the rose herself has got
Perfume which on earth is not;
Where the nightingale doth sing
Not a senseless, trancéd thing,

But divine melodious truth;
Philosophic numbers smooth;
Tales and golden histories
Of heaven and its mysteries.

Thus ye live on high, and then
On the earth ye live again;
And the souls ye left behind you
Teach us, here, the way to find you,
Where your other souls are joying,
Never slumber'd, never cloying.
Here, your earth-born souls still speak
To mortals, of their little week;
Of their sorrows and delights;
Of their passions and their spites;
Of their glory and their shame;
What doth strengthen and what maim:—
Thus ye teach us, every day,
Wisdom, though fled far away.

Bards of Passion and of Mirth
Ye have left your souls on earth!
Ye have souls in heaven too,
Double-lived in regions new!

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rime,
What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempé or the dales of Arcady?

What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearièd,
For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
For ever panting, and for ever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
What little town by river or sea shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of its folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
'T is not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thine happiness,—
That thou, light-wingéd Dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delvéd earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stainéd mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and specter-thin, and dies
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs;
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalméd darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a muséd rime,
To take into the air my quiet breath;

Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home.
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is famed to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 't is buried deep
In the next valley-glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?

ODE TO AUTUMN

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;

To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease;
For Summer has o'erbrimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twinéd flowers:
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings, hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
While barréd clouds bloom the soft-dying day
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river-sallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

"O WHAT can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge has wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

"O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms!
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest 's done.

"I see a lily on thy brow
With anguish moist and fever-dew,
And on thy cheeks a fading rose
Fast withereth too."

"I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful—a faery's child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

"I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She look'd at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

"I set her on my pacing steed
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
A faery's song.

"She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild and manna-dew,
And sure in language strange she said
'I love thee true.'

"She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she wept and sigh'd full sore;
And there I shut her wild wild eyes
With kisses four.

"And there she lullèd me asleep,
And there I dream'd—Ah! woe betide!
The latest dream I ever dream'd
On the cold hill's side.

"I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all:
They cried—'La Belle Dame sans Merci
Hath thee in thrall!'

"I saw their starved lips in the gloam
With horrid warning gapèd wide,
And I awoke and found me here
On the cold hill's side.

"And this is why I sojourn here
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing."

BRIGHT STAR! WOULD I WERE STEADFAST

Bright Star! would I were steadfast as thou art—
Not in lone splendor hung aloft the night,
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like Nature's patient sleepless Eremite.
The moving waters at their priestlike task
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
Or gazing on the new soft fallen mask
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors:—

No—yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,
Pillow'd upon my fair Love's ripening breast
To feel forever its soft fall and swell,
Awake forever in a sweet unrest;
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever,—or else swoon to death.

THE LESSER POETS

Sir Walter Scott

An engraving by Heath after a portrait by Saxon

SELECTIONS FROM THE LESSER POETS

GATHERING SONG OF DONALD THE BLACK

Pibroch of Donuil Dhu
Pibroch of Donuil
Wake thy wild voice anew,
Summon Clan Conuil.
Come away, come away,
Hark to the summons!
Come in your war-array,
Gentles and commons.

Come from deep glen, and
From mountain so rocky;
The war-pipe and pennon
Are at Inverlocky.
Come every hill-plaid, and
True heart that wears one,
Come every steel blade, and
Strong hand that bears one.

Leave untended the herd,
The flock without shelter;
Leave the corpse uninterr'd,
The bride at the altar;
Leave the deer, leave the steer,
Leave nets and barges:
Come with your fighting gear,
Broadswords and targes.

Come as the winds come, when
  Forests are rended,
Come as the waves come, when
  Navies are stranded:
Faster come, faster come,
  Faster and faster,
Chief, vassal, page and groom,
  Tenant and master.

Fast they come, fast they come;
  See how they gather!
Wide waves the eagle plume
  Blended with heather.
Cast your plaids, draw your blades,
  Forward each man set!
Pibroch of Donuil Dhu
  Knell for the onset!

Scott.

A SERENADE

Ah! County Guy, the hour is nigh,
  The sun has left the lea,
The orange-flower perfumes the bower,
  The breeze is on the sea.
The lark, his lay who trill'd all day,
  Sits hush'd his partner nigh;
Breeze, bird, and flower confess the hour,
  But where is County Guy?

The village maid steals through the shade
  Her shepherd's suit to hear;
To Beauty shy, by lattice high,
  Sings high-born Cavalier.

The star of Love, all stars above,
  Now reigns o'er earth and sky,
And high and low the influence know—
  But where is County Guy?

Scott.

CORONACH

He is gone on the mountain,
  He is lost to the forest,
Like a summer-dried fountain,
  When our need was the sorest.
The font reappearing
  From the raindrops shall borrow,
But to us comes no cheering,
  To Duncan no morrow!

The hand of the reaper
  Takes the ears that are hoary,
But the voice of the weeper
  Wails manhood in glory.
The autumn winds rushing
  Waft the leaves that are searest,
But our flower was in flushing
  When blighting was nearest.

Fleet foot on the correi,
  Sage counsel in cumber,
Red hand in the foray,
  How sound is thy slumber!
Like the dew on the mountain,
  Like the foam on the river,
Like the bubble on the fountain,
  Thou art gone; and for ever!

Scott.

HUNTING SONG

WAKEN, lords and ladies gay,
On the mountain dawns the day;
All the jolly chase is here
With hawk and horse and hunting-spear;
Hounds are in their couples yelling,
Hawks are whistling, horns are knelling,
Merrily merrily mingle they,
"Waken, lords and ladies gay."

Waken, lords and ladies gay,
The mist has left the mountain gray,
Springlets in the dawn are steaming,
Diamonds on the brake are gleaming;
And foresters have busy been
To track the buck in thicket green;
Now we come to chant our lay
"Waken, lords and ladies gay."

Waken, lords and ladies gay,
To the greenwood haste away;
We can show you where he lies,
Fleet of foot and tall of size;
We can show the marks he made
When 'gainst the oak his antlers fray'd;
You shall see him brought to bay;
"Waken, lords and ladies gay."

Louder, louder chant the lay
Waken, lords and ladies gay!
Tell them youth and mirth and glee
Run a course as well as we;

Time, stern huntsman! who can balk,
Stanch as hound and fleet as hawk;
Think of this, and rise with day,
Gentle lords and ladies gay!

Scott.

DATUR HORA QUIETI

The sun upon the lake is low,
The wild birds hush their song,
The hills have evening's deepest glow,
Yet Leonard tarries long.
Now all whom varied toil and care
From home and love divide,
In the calm sunset may repair
Each to the loved one's side.

The noble dame, on turret high,
Who waits her gallant knight,
Looks to the western beam to spy
The flash of armor bright.
The village maid, with hand on brow
The level ray to shade,
Upon the footpath watches now
For Colin's darkening plaid.

Now to their mates the wild swans row,
By day they swam apart,
And to the thicket wanders slow
The hind beside the hart.
The woodlark at his partner's side
Twitters his closing song—
All meet whom day and care divide,
But Leonard tarries long!

Scott.

THE ROVER

A WEARY lot is thine, fair maid,
A weary lot is thine!
To pull the thorn thy brow to braid,
And press the rue for wine.
A lightsome eye, a soldier's mien,
A feather of the blue,
A doublet of the Lincoln green—
No more of me you knew
My Love!
No more of me you knew.

"This morn is merry June, I trow,
The rose is budding fain;
But she shall bloom in winter snow
Ere we two meet again."
He turn'd his charger as he spake
Upon the river shore,
He gave the bridal-reins a shake,
Said "Adieu for evermore
My Love!
And adieu for evermore."

Scott.

JOCK OF HAZELDEAN

"WHY weep ye by the tide, ladie?
Why weep ye by the tide?
I 'll wed ye to my youngest son,
And ye sall be his bride:
And ye sall be his bride, ladie,
Sae comely to be seen"—
But aye she loot[1] the tears down fa'
For Jock of Hazeldean.

[1] Loot = let.

"Now let this wilfu' grief be done,
And dry that cheek so pale;
Young Frank is chief of Errington
And Lord of Langley-dale;
His step is first in peaceful ha',
His sword in battle keen"—
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock of Hazeldean.

"A chain of gold ye sall not lack,
Nor braid to bind your hair,
Nor mettled hound, nor managed hawk,
Nor palfrey fresh and fair;
And you the foremost o' them a'
Shall ride our forest-queen"—
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock of Hazeldean.

The kirk was deck'd at morning-tide,
The tapers glimmer'd fair;
The priest and bridegroom wait the bride,
And dame and knight are there:
They sought her baith by bower and ha';
The ladie was not seen!
She 's o'er the Border, and awa'
Wi' Jock of Hazeldean.

Scott.

SONG TO THE EVENING STAR

STAR that bringest home the bee,
And sett'st the weary laborer free!
If any star shed peace, 't is Thou
That send'st it from above,
Appearing when Heaven's breath and brow
Are sweet as hers we love.

Come to the luxuriant skies,
Whilst the landscape's odors rise,
Whilst far-off lowing herds are heard
And songs when toil is done,
From cottages whose smoke unstirr'd
Curls yellow in the sun.

Star of love's soft interviews,
Parted lovers on thee muse;
Their remembrancer in Heaven
Of thrilling vows thou art,
Too delicious to be riven
By absence from the heart.

Campbell.

LORD ULLIN'S DAUGHTER

A Chieftain to the Highlands bound
Cries "Boatman, do not tarry!
And I 'll give thee a silver pound
To row us o'er the ferry!"

"Now who be ye, would cross Lochgyle,
This dark and stormy water?"
"O I 'm the chief of Ulva's isle,
And this, Lord Ullin's daughter.

"And fast before her father's men
Three days we 've fled together,
For should he find us in the glen,
My blood would stain the heather.

"His horsemen hard behind us ride—
Should they our steps discover,
Then who will cheer my bonny bride,
When they have slain her lover?"

Out spoke the hardy Highland wight,
"I 'll go, my chief, I 'm ready:
It is not for your silver bright,
But for your winsome lady:—

"And by my word! the bonny bird
In danger shall not tarry;
So though the waves are raging white
I 'll row you o'er the ferry."

By this the storm grew loud apace,
The water-wraith was shrieking;
And in the scowl of Heaven each face
Grew dark as they were speaking.

But still as wilder blew the wind,
And as the night grew drearer,
Adown the glen rode arméd men,
Their trampling sounded nearer.

"O haste thee, haste!" the lady cries,
"Though tempests round us gather;
I 'll meet the raging of the skies,
But not an angry father."

The boat has left a stormy land,
A stormy sea before her,—
When, oh! too strong for human hand
The tempest gather'd o'er her.

And still they row'd amidst the roar
Of waters fast prevailing:
Lord Ullin reach'd that fatal shore,—
His wrath was changed to wailing.

For, sore dismay'd, through storm and shade
His child he did discover:—
One lovely hand she stretch'd for aid,
And one was round her lover.

"Come back! come back!" he cried in grief
"Across this stormy water:
And I 'll forgive your Highland chief,
My daughter!—Oh, my daughter!"

'T was vain: the loud waves lash'd the shore,
Return or aid preventing:
The waters wild went o'er his child,
And he was left lamenting.

Campbell.

HOHENLINDEN

On Linden, when the sun was low,
All bloodless lay the untrodden snow;
And dark as winter was the flow
Of Iser, rolling rapidly.

But Linden saw another sight,
When the drum beat at dead of night
Commanding fires of death to light
The darkness of her scenery.

By torch and trumpet fast array'd
Each horseman drew his battle-blade
And furious every charger neigh'd
To join the dreadful revelry.

Then shook the hills with thunder riven;
Then rush'd the steed, to battle driven;
And louder than the bolts of Heaven
Far flashed the red artillery.

But redder yet that light shall grow
On Linden's hills of stainéd snow;
And bloodier yet the torrent flow
Of Iser, rolling rapidly.

'T is morn; but scarce yon level sun
Can pierce the war-clouds, rolling dun,
Where furious Frank and fiery Hun
Shout in their sulphurous canopy.

The combat deepens. On, ye Brave
Who rush to glory, or the grave!
Wave, Munich! all thy banners wave,
And charge with all thy chivalry!

Few, few shall part, where many meet!
The snow shall be their winding-sheet,
And every turf beneath their feet
Shall be a soldier's sepulchre.

Campbell.

YE MARINERS OF ENGLAND

Ye Mariners of England
That guard our native seas!
Whose flag has braved, a thousand years,
The battle and the breeze!
Your glorious standard launch again
To match another foe:
And sweep through the deep,
While the stormy winds do blow;
While the battle rages loud and long
And the stormy winds do blow.

The spirits of your fathers
Shall start from every wave—
For the deck it was their field of fame,
And Ocean was their grave:
Where Blake and mighty Nelson fell
Your manly hearts shall glow,
As ye sweep through the deep,
While the stormy winds do blow;
While the battle rages loud and long
And the stormy winds do blow.

Britannia needs no bulwarks,
No towers along the steep;
Her march is o'er the mountain-waves,
Her home is on the deep.
With thunders from her native oak
She quells the floods below—
As they roar on the shore,
When the stormy winds do blow;
When the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow.

The meteor flag of England
Shall yet terrific burn;
Till danger's troubled night depart
And the star of peace return.
Then, then, ye ocean-warriors!
Our song and feast shall flow
To the fame of your name,
When the storm has ceased to blow;
When the fiery fight is heard no more,
And the storm has ceased to blow.

Campbell.

HESTER

When maidens such as Hester die
Their place ye may not well supply,
Though ye among a thousand try
With vain endeavor.
A month or more hath she been dead,
Yet cannot I by force be led
To think upon the wormy bed
And her together.

A springy motion in her gait,
A rising step, did indicate
Of pride and joy no common rate
That flush'd her spirit:
I know not by what name beside
I shall it call: if 't was not pride,
It was a joy to that allied
She did inherit.

Her parents held the Quaker rule,
Which doth the human feeling cool;
But she was train'd in Nature's school,
Nature had blest her.
A waking eye, a prying mind,
A heart that stirs, is hard to bind;
A hawk's keen sight ye cannot blind,
Ye could not Hester.

My sprightly neighbor! gone before
To that unknown and silent shore,
Shall we not meet, as heretofore
Some summer morning—

When from thy cheerful eyes a ray
Hath struck a bliss upon the day,
A bliss that would not go away,
A sweet fore-warning?

Lamb.

ON AN INFANT DYING AS SOON AS BORN

I saw where in the shroud did lurk
A curious frame of Nature's work;
A flow'ret crushéd in the bud,
A nameless piece of Babyhood,
Was in her cradle-coffin lying;
Extinct, with scarce the sense of dying:
So soon to exchange the imprisoning womb
For the darker closets of the tomb!
She did but ope an eye, and put
A clear beam forth, then straight up shut
For the long dark: ne'er more to see
Through glasses of mortality.
Riddle of destiny, who can show
What thy short visit meant, or know
What thy errand here below?
Shall we say, that Nature blind
Check'd her hand, and changed her mind
Just when she had exactly wrought
A finish'd pattern without fault?
Could she flag, or could she tire,
Or lack'd she the Promethean fire
(With her nine moons' long workings sicken'd)
That should thy little limbs have quicken'd?
Limbs so firm, they seem'd to assure
Life of health, and days mature:
Woman's self in miniature!
Limbs so fair, they might supply
(Themselves now but cold imagery)

The sculptor to make Beauty by.
Or did the stern-eyed Fate descry
That babe or mother, one must die;
So in mercy left the stock
And cut the branch; to save the shock
Of young years widow'd, and the pain
When Single State comes back again
To the lone man who, reft of wife,
Thenceforward drags a maiméd life?
The economy of Heaven is dark,
And wisest clerks have miss'd the mark
Why human buds, like this, should fall,
More brief than fly ephemeral
That has his day; while shrivel'd crones
Stiffen with age to stocks and stones;
And crabbéd use the conscience sears
In sinners of an hundred years.
—Mother's prattle, mother's kiss,
Baby fond, thou ne'er wilt miss:
Rites, which custom does impose,
Silver bells, and baby clothes;
Coral redder than those lips
Which pale death did late eclipse;
Music framed for infants' glee,
Whistle never tuned for thee;
Though thou want'st not, thou shalt have them,
Loving hearts were they which gave them.
Let not one be missing; nurse,
See them laid upon the hearse
Of infant slain by doom perverse.
Why should kings and nobles have
Pictured trophies to their grave,
And we, churls, to thee deny
Thy pretty toys with thee to lie—
A more harmless vanity?

Lamb.

THE OLD FAMILIAR FACES

I HAVE had playmates, I have had companions,
In my days of childhood, in my joyful school-days;
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have been laughing, I have been carousing,
Drinking late, sitting late, with my bosom cronies;
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I loved a Love once, fairest among women:
Closed are her doors on me, I must not see her—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have a friend, a kinder friend has no man:
Like an ingrate, I left my friend abruptly;
Left him, to muse on the old familiar faces.

Ghost-like I paced round the haunts of my childhood,
Earth seem'd a desert I was bound to traverse,
Seeking to find the old familiar faces.

Friend of my bosom, thou more than a brother,
Why wert not thou born in my father's dwelling?
So might we talk of the old familiar faces,

How some they have died, and some they have left me,
And some are taken from me; all are departed;
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

Lamb.

George W. Bale, Jr.

-D25*

PAST AND PRESENT

I REMEMBER, I remember
The house where I was born,
The little window where the sun
Came peeping in at morn;
He never came a wink too soon
Nor brought too long a day;
But now, I often wish the night
Had borne my breath away.

I remember, I remember
The roses, red and white,
The violets, and the lily-cups—
Those flowers made of light!
The lilacs where the robin built,
And where my brother set
The laburnum on his birth-day,—
The tree is living yet!

I remember, I remember
Where I was used to swing,
And thought the air must rush as fresh
To swallows on the wing;
My spirit flew in feathers then
That is so heavy now,
And summer pools could hardly cool
The fever on my brow.

I remember, I remember
The fir trees dark and high;
I used to think their slender tops
Were close against the sky:

It was a childish ignorance,
But now 't is little joy
To know I 'm farther off from Heaven
Than when I was a boy.

Hood.

THE DEATH BED

We watch'd her breathing thro' the night,
Her breathing soft and low,
As in her breast the wave of life
Kept heaving to and fro.

So silently we seem'd to speak,
So slowly moved about,
As we had lent her half our powers
To eke her living out.

Our very hopes belied our fears,
Our fears our hopes belied—
We thought her dying when she slept,
And sleeping when she died.

For when the morn came dim and sad
And chill with early showers,
Her quiet eyelids closed—she had
Another morn than ours.

Hood.

THE BURIAL OF SIR JOHN MOORE AT CORUNNA

Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
As his corpse to the rampart we hurried;
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
O'er the grave where our hero we buried.

We buried him darkly at dead of night,
The sods with our bayonets turning;
By the struggling moonbeam's misty light
And the lantern dimly burning.

No useless coffin enclosed his breast,
Not in sheet or in shroud we wound him;
But he lay like a warrior taking his rest,
With his martial cloak around him.

Few and short were the prayers we said,
And we spoke not a word of sorrow;
But we steadfastly gazed on the face that was dead,
And we bitterly thought of the morrow.

We thought, as we hollow'd his narrow bed
And smoothed down his lonely pillow,
That the foe and the stranger would tread o'er his head,
And we far away on the billow!

Lightly they 'll talk of the spirit that 's gone
And o'er his cold ashes upbraid him,—
But little he 'll reck, if they let him sleep on,
In the grave where a Briton has laid him.

But half of our heavy task was done
When the clock struck the hour for retiring:
And we heard the distant and random gun
That the foe was sullenly firing.

Slowly and sadly we laid him down,
From the field of his fame fresh and gory;
We carved not a line, and we raised not a stone,
But we left him alone with his glory.

Wolfe.

THE YOUNG MAY MOON

The young May moon is beaming, love,
The glow-worm's lamp is gleaming, love,
How sweet to rove
Through Morna's grove,
When the drowsy world is dreaming, love!
Then awake!—the heavens look bright, my dear,
'T is never too late for delight, my dear,
And the best of all ways
To lengthen our days,
Is to steal a few hours from the night, my dear!

Now all the world is sleeping, love,
But the Sage, his star-watch keeping, love,
And I, whose star,
More glorious far,
Is the eye from that casement peeping, love.
Then awake!—till rise of sun, my dear,
The Sage's glass we 'll shun, my dear,
Or, in watching the flight
Of bodies of light,
He might happen to take thee for one, my dear.

Moore.

THE JOURNEY ONWARDS

As slow our ship her foamy track
Against the wind was cleaving,
Her trembling pennant still look'd back
To that dear isle 't was leaving.
So loth we part from all we love,
From all the links that bind us;
So turn our hearts, as on we rove,
To those we 've left behind us!

When, round the bowl, of vanish'd years
We talk with joyous seeming—
With smiles that might as well be tears,
So faint, so sad their beaming;
While memory brings us back again
Each early tie that twined us,
Oh, sweet 's the cup that circles then
To those we 've left behind us!

And when, in other climes, we meet
Some isle or vale enchanting,
Where all looks flowery, wild, and sweet,
And nought but love is wanting;
We think how great had been our bliss
If Heaven had but assign'd us
To live and die in scenes like this,
With some we 've left behind us!

As travelers oft look back at eve
When eastward darkly going,
To gaze upon that light they leave
Still faint behind them glowing,—
So, when the close of pleasure'd day
To gloom hath near consign'd us,
We turn to catch one fading ray
Of joy that 's left behind us.

Moore.

THE LIGHT OF OTHER DAYS

Oft in the stilly night
Ere slumber's chain has bound me,
Fond Memory brings the light
Of other days around me:
The smiles, the tears
Of boyhood's years,

The words of love then spoken;
The eyes that shone,
Now dimm'd and gone,
The cheerful hearts now broken!
Thus in the stilly night
Ere slumber's chain has bound me,
Sad Memory brings the light
Of other days around me.

When I remember all
The friends so link'd together
I 've seen around me fall
Like leaves in wintry weather,
I feel like one
Who treads alone
Some banquet-hall deserted,
Whose lights are fled
Whose garlands dead,
And all but he departed!
Thus in the stilly night
Ere slumber's chain has bound me
Sad Memory brings the light
Of other days around me.

Moore.

A WET SHEET AND A FLOWING SEA

A WET sheet and a flowing sea,
A wind that follows fast
And fills the white and rustling sail
And bends the gallant mast;
And bends the gallant mast, my boys,
While like the eagle free
Away the good ship flies, and leaves
Old England on the lee.

O for a soft and gentle wind!
I heard a fair one cry;
But give to me the snoring breeze
And white waves heaving high;
And white waves heaving high, my lads,
The good ship tight and free—
The world of waters is our home,
And merry men are we.

There 's tempest in yon hornéd moon,
And lightning in yon cloud;
But hark the music, mariners!
The wind is piping loud;
The wind is piping loud, my boys,
The lightning flashes free—
While the hollow oak our palace is,
Our heritage the sea.

Cunningham.

George Ball, Jr.

NOTES AND COMMENT

(Heavy numerals refer to lines of the poems)

THERE are two ways of reading poetry, both profitable. One is to read with the single purpose of discovering the author's meaning, just what ideas and emotions he is trying to make his readers understand and feel; and the other is to read with the intention of discovering also the interest and value in every allusion which he makes. For poetry even more than prose is compact; it is full of ideas which gain a great deal of their value because of their association with other ideas which are already in the mind of the writer and which he presumes to be in the mind of the reader also. When Wordsworth, for example, writes

> "Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
> Or hear old Triton blow his wreathéd horn,"

he has in mind certain definite figures of Greek mythology, and if the reader does not know whom the Greeks imagined Proteus and Triton to be, he misses to some extent at least the effect of Wordsworth's imagery. It is true, however, that in many cases the reader's imagination is stimulated by such names and allusions to delightful visions of its own; and it is very easy to overestimate the value of investigating and discovering the exact significance of the poet's references. Certainly nobody would deny that it is much more important to understand his message than it is to understand his allusions, and if discussion of his allusions distracts the reader's attention from the real meaning and delight of the poem as a whole, then such discussion has been carried too far.

The most important thing, then, for the reader of these poems to ask himself is, What idea has Wordsworth or Shelley or Scott tried to make plain? What does he mean? Sometimes the emotion of the poem is very simple, as in *The Reverie of Poor Susan*, where Wordsworth's attempt is only to tell the reader how this poor old woman in

London, whenever she used to hear a caged thrush singing, was reminded of her home when she was a girl in the country, and how beautiful and yet how sad were her recollections. Sometimes the emotion is more complicated, as in Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind*, in which the poet's apostrophe to the wind is bound up with his own feeling that he and the wind are akin to each other, trying to accomplish the same renewal of life in a dead world. Sometimes, as in Wordsworth's *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*, the feeling is not to be called purely emotional, but is the expression of wonder and speculation that is almost a kind of philosophy. It is generally true, however, that in poetry of a fine and high order, such as the selections in this book almost exclusively consist of, the idea or the emotion is simple and clear, and with the assistance of a few suggestions a reader, even if he has not been very much accustomed to the reading of poetry, ought not to feel himself confused or doubtful about what each poem means. Whether the meaning of the poem does or does not particularly appeal to him, depends of course on what his own moods and feelings and training have been. The more he reads and the longer he lives and continues to widen his experiences, of course the more open he will be to different sorts of emotional interest. But the man or woman never lived to whom some sorts of poetry did not appeal, and the idea that one does not "like poetry" means simply that one has never tried to read it, or else that one has read it as an exercise rather than as a pleasure.

For it is absolutely necessary that in reading poetry we realize that we are not reading prose. The ideas which are presented to us in poetry are so presented because they are fitted to that kind of presentation, and to understand them and enjoy them we must be able to appreciate the way in which they are presented. Anybody who can read, can read prose; but to read poetry some special training is necessary. This training concerns itself chiefly of course with the matter of rhythm. The chief beauty of poetry, so far as rhythm is concerned, lies in the contrast between the steady *onward* movement of the idea and the regular *recurring* beat of the verse. If, in reading, the expression of the idea is sacrificed to the desire to emphasize the regular beat of the verse, the reading becomes monotonous, mechan-

ical, and dull. One might almost as well substitute la la la, la la la, la la la, for the words of the poet. If on the other hand the reader is so much taken up with the expression of the poet's idea that he ignores the beat of the poet's music, then he is really defeating the poet's own intention. For he is reading the ideas as if they had been written in prose. But the reader must pay attention also to the general form of the poem, as well as to its arrangement of meter. We may start with the assumption that the poets did nothing carelessly, that if they used a particular form they did so because they thought that form was especially suited to the ideas they had at that particular time to express. In the *Ode to the West Wind*, as has been said, Shelley's emotions are more or less complicated. So he adopts a verse-form which gives him room fully to develop those emotions with due regard to their dignity as well as to their beauty. Wordsworth, on the other hand, in *The Reverie of Poor Susan*, with his extremely simple idea, can use a simple form of verse. It is thus worth while to notice the different forms which the various writers employ, and to ask oneself why this form or that was used in this instance. The immense variety of these forms is an interesting illustration of the fact that at this particular period every poet was a law to himself. There was no prescribed fashion in accordance with which he had to write.

The following notes, therefore, are planned first to explain the meaning of any particular poem when that meaning seems in any way obscure; second, to comment upon such allusions or such unusual words or phrases in the poem as seem to demand comment; and third, to bring out in some cases the essential relation of the form of the poem to the idea which it is intended to convey.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

The Reverie of Poor Susan (Page 3)

This is one of many poems in which Wordsworth exemplified his theory that poetry should deal with simple subjects in simple language. The poem arose, he said, from his "observation of the affecting music of these birds (canaries) hanging in this way in the

London streets during the freshness and stillness of the Spring morning." Lothbury and Cheapside (lines 7, 8) are streets in London.

Simon Lee, the Old Huntsman (Page 3)

Coleridge, writing in 1817, declared that if Wordsworth had cut out one hundred lines of his poetry, half the criticism directed against him would have been avoided. Some such faulty lines are in this poem—see for instance stanza ten. On the other hand, the final stanza is Wordsworth on a high level. A careful reading of this poem, and especially of the eighth and ninth stanzas, will enable one to understand pretty well the lesson of the commonplace as Wordsworth tried to teach it.

Lines Written in Early Spring (Page 7)

This is one of the poems in which Wordsworth's unusual view of Nature comes out most clearly. Note the third and fifth stanzas particularly.

The Two April Mornings (Page 8)

If you remember Wordsworth's definition of the proper material of poetry you will see how exactly this poem fits his idea.

The Fountain (Page 10)

A companion-piece to *The Two April Mornings*. It illustrates well the unevenness of Wordsworth's power. The first seven stanzas are commonplace; what follows for five stanzas is beautiful; and the work ends with commonplace verses again.

She Dwelt Among Untrodden Ways (Page 12)

This and the three poems which follow it belong together. *Lucy*, here addressed, may or may not have been a real person. If she really lived, we do not know who she was.

The Education of Nature (Page 13)

One of the group to *Lucy*. Taken in connection with *Lines Written in Early Spring*, it shows how very strong was Wordsworth's belief that only by a study of Nature can we understand God; that only by living as Nature bids us can we become beautiful in character—even beautiful in face and form. One of Wordsworth's critics, Lord Morley, thinks that Wordsworth did not really believe these things, but expressed only a poetic imagination here. Another critic, Walter Raleigh, argues that Wordsworth believed exactly what he says.

Lucy Gray (Page 15)

This was founded on fact, Wordsworth says. A little girl in Yorkshire was lost as the story is given here.

Ruth (Page 18)

This story, too, has its basis in fact—a girl whose reason left her when she was abandoned by her lover and who wandered about the Cumberland hills as the poet describes. The picture of Indian life in America which Wordsworth here gives he undoubtedly believed to be in the main a true one. At that time (1800) Englishmen knew less about America than most Americans know to-day about (let us say) Manchuria. The Indian was regarded as a kind of happy child of nature, undefiled by contact with civilization.

England and Switzerland, 1802 (Page 26)

Napoleon conquered Switzerland in 1800. The "two voices" are those of Switzerland (The Mountains) and England (The Sea). These facts will explain the sonnet. This and the four sonnets which follow are all on phases of the one subject—Liberty. Note that the French had conquered Venice also, some years earlier.

Upon Westminster Bridge (Page 29)

See how Wordsworth finds for poetical material in the city, *not* the humanity which crowds it, but rather the beauty of that one spe-

cial moment of the day when humanity is quiet and Nature rules, as she rules always in solitary places.

By the Sea (Page 29)

This sonnet is addressed to the poet's sister Dorothy.

To the Daisy (Page 30)

A subject which Wordsworth took, remembering that Burns had also written upon it. A comparison of the two poems is interesting.

The Rainbow (Page 31)

Of all Wordsworth's poems wholly simple in form, this is perhaps the most successful.

Neidpath Castle (Page 32)

Neidpath Castle was in the West Riding in Yorkshire. It was the seat of the Marquis of Queensberry, whose family name was Douglas. Wordsworth's passion for beautiful natural objects led him to detestation of the man who would ruin a beautiful view to make a little money. This poem, and the three on Scotch subjects that follow, were written while Wordsworth and his sister were on a walking tour in Scotland in 1803.

To The Highland Girl of Inversneyde (Page 32)

"When beginning to descend the hill toward Loch Lomond we overtook two girls, who told us we could not cross the ferry until evening, for the boat was gone with a number of people to church. One of the girls was exceedingly beautiful: and the figures of both of them in gray plaids falling to their feet, their faces only being uncovered, excited our attention before we spoke to them. I think I never heard the English language sound more sweetly than from the mouth of the elder of these girls, as she stood at the gate answering our inquiries, her face flushed with the rain."—Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal*.

The Solitary Reaper (Page 35)

Of all Wordsworth's short poems, this has perhaps most admirers. Every line has a strange haunting melody; every emotion it arouses is at once mysterious and sincere. Had the poet written this only, he must have taken rank at least with Gray, and the poem must have been remembered as the famous *Elegy* is remembered.

Glen-Almain, the Narrow Glen (Page 36)

Ossian was a legendary hero-poet of Scotland.

The Green Linnet (Page 37)

Observe, in the fourth stanza here, an example of the close observation which so differentiated the poets of this time from the poets of the time of Pope. Compare this, too, with similar keen-sightedness on the part of Tennyson, as in the first stanza of *Mariana*.

She was a Phantom of Delight (Page 38)

Written of the poet's wife, Mary Hutchinson Wordsworth. The first four lines are reminiscent of the poem to the *Highland Girl of Inversneyde*.

A Lesson (Page 39)

What is the "lesson" here? Does Wordsworth mean that to grow old is to suffer and be sad?

The Affliction of Margaret (Page 40)

Margaret, the mother, is supposed to be speaking. Which stanzas might really be her own words, and which are "poetic" in the highest sense?

To the Cuckoo (Page 43)

This and the poem *The Daffodils* which follows, are fine examples of the best type of poetry which Wordsworth produced—simple, beau-

tiful lyrics upon subjects which came to him as he walked about the countryside, and the memory of which he carried home to brood upon.

The Daffodils (Page 44)

Two of the best lines here—

> "They flash upon that inward eye
> Which is the bliss of solitude"—

were composed by the poet's wife.

Ode to Duty (Page 45)

It is not a coincidence, but part of the invincible difference between the older and the younger poet, that Wordsworth's great ode should be addressed to *Duty* and Keats's to *Beauty*. They had contradictory views of what a poet's message ought to be. Compare the note on p. 212, to Keats's *Ode on a Grecian Urn*.

To the Skylark (Page 47)

Only to be compared with Shelley's longer poem on the same subject. Shelley is carried away by the ecstasy and passion of the bird's song; Wordsworth finds in the lark an illustration of the wise fine spirit which from its own hearthstone can understand and serve the world.

Nature and the Poet (Page 47)

The references in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh stanzas are to the poet's brother, Capt. John Wordsworth, drowned in the wreck of a ship of which he was in charge.

The World is Too Much With Us (Page 51)

Probably the most famous of Wordsworth's sonnets, this is one nevertheless sometimes misunderstood. What the poet declares is that, *rather* than be sunk in commercial ideas, "getting and spending," he would be a pagan; then at least he might have glimpses of something higher than himself. He does not, however, say that paganism

is preferable to belief in God, or that it is necessary to be a pagan to love Nature.

Ode on Intimations of Immortality (Page 51)

This, the "famous Ode" as it has been called, can easily be overstudied. It is not really philosophy; it is poetry. Its beauty is its excuse for being. It may be read as a series of splendid passages with almost as much enjoyment as when it is read as a whole. Nevertheless, that its general meaning may be understood, a brief analysis is given.

Stanzas I–IV declare that, for all the poet's delight in the beauty of nature, he misses something that he once found in that beauty—he misses the "visionary gleam," "the glory and the dream."

Stanza V states the reason of this loss he feels, and stanzas VI and VII elaborate this reason.

Stanza VIII, beginning "Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie Thy soul's immensity"—is a long apostrophe to the child—"thou, little child"—warning him of the saddening effect of years.

Stanzas IX and X are a glad confession that, in spite of years, however, "something still doth live" of the old joy; and in stanza XI, the last, the poet almost admits that for all life takes away of gayety and clear knowledge of God, it gives back recompense in "the philosophic mind."

The theory of the poem, i. e., that youth better than age understands God and delights in purity and peace, has often been attacked, and from the point of view of science and practical fact cannot indeed be successfully defended. But Wordsworth is not arguing; he is giving us his own emotions in words so melodious, in figures so beautiful, that the poem stands now as it has stood for a hundred years, among the very highest examples of English poetry.

Yarrow Unvisited (Page 58)

The Yarrow is a little river hardly more than a creek, in Selkirkshire, Scotland. It was dear to Dorothy Wordsworth through its associations with an old ballad—*The Braes of Yarrow*—from which

many quotations are taken and used in Wordsworth's poem; for example, "winsome marrow," "fair hangs the apple frae the rock," "bonnie holms," etc.

Desideria (Page 63)

The poem is in recollection of Wordsworth's daughter Catherine, who had died as a little girl years before it was written.

Within King's College Chapel, Cambridge (Page 63)

The royal saint (line 1) is Henry VI, King of England, 1422–1461, who began the chapel but left it incomplete. In the elaborate, graceful ornamentation of its interior it is one of the most striking buildings in England.

The Trosachs (Page 64)

A pass in Scotland between Lake Katrine and Lake Achray, in Perthshire.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Kubla Khan (Page 69)

The story of the composition of *Kubla Khan* has been told in the introductory sketch of Coleridge. The poem is a dream—a fantasy—and should be so read. It does not tell a story; still less has it any lesson to teach. It is almost pure music. Kipling thinks the three lines beginning "A savage place!" are among the five or six most melodious and imaginative lines in English poetry.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner (Page 71)

The history of this poem has also been told in the introductory sketch. The "gloss," or prose explanation in the margin, was not a part of the original composition, but was added by Coleridge in 1817. It, like the verse, is partly in imitation of older English. No detailed study of *The Ancient Mariner* is necessary here; the story is simple

and clear, and the music of the verse is easy to follow. Certain points should be noted, however.

(1) Coleridge's purpose was primarily to *tell a story*. This story was supernatural—that is to say, it dealt with incidents and characters outside the world of science and understanding—with incidents and characters in which we can believe, as we believe a fairy story, only by laying aside temporarily our ordinary preconceived ideas of what is and is not. A story of the supernatural is not "good if true"; it is good, if it makes us cease to care, while we read, whether it is or is not true. Coleridge helped so to rouse the imagination of his readers that for the time being they were carried away by his words.

(2) A secondary object has been too much emphasized. There is a "moral" in the poem—"Be cruel and you will suffer; repent, be kind, and you will be forgiven." But Coleridge did not write the poem to enforce this moral. He thought late in life that far too much stress had been laid upon this moral by critics.

(3) The poem, then, was written to be enjoyed. Some of the descriptions are marvelously close to fact. "The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out; At one stride comes the dark"—is scientifically accurate in its portrayal of a tropical sunset. "I bit my arm, I sucked the blood, And cried A Sail! a sail!" is a detail as true to life as anything in the most "realistic" novel. On the other hand, some equally beautiful passages have no possible likeness to fact. "All in a hot and copper sky The bloody sun at noon Right up above the mast did stand No bigger than the moon" is untrue to fact. The moon does not glimmer through fog. Sea water does not burn "green and blue and white." What of it? The untruth to fact is no more important than the truth to fact of the other passages. "A willing suspension of disbelief" while reading, was all the poet asked. Read in the spirit he wrote it, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* defies criticism; looked at as a traveler's account of a voyage in the tropics, or a sermon on kindness to dumb animals, and the charm dies away from it.

Lines 5–8. Note how the wedding feast contrasts with the mariner's terrible story, and so makes it the more vivid. Keats

uses contrast in the same skillful fashion in *The Eve of St. Agnes* (p. 141) by showing us first the poor, cold, old beadsman, lonely and sad, then telling the brilliant love-story of Madeline and Porphyro, and at the end introducing once more the beadsman dying forlorn.

12. **Eftsoons:** very soon.

23–24. Compare the order of church, hill and lighthouse with that in lines 466, 467. Is this accidental?

25. If the sun came up on their left and went down on their right, in which direction were they traveling?

62. **Swound:** swoon.

76. "For vespers nine" means that for nine days the bird came each evening to rest upon the ship.

79–80. Compare the method of description in this stanza with that in stanzas 128 and 129 in Part VII.

194 In the first edition, Coleridge had the following stanza at this point:—

> His bones were black with many a crack
> All bare and black, I ween;
> Jet black and bare, save where with rust
> Of mouldy damp and charnel crust
> They 're patched with purple and green.

From all subsequent editions this stanza was wisely omitted.

199. If any lines in the poem are to be chosen as particularly effective in their descriptive force, those which make up the next two stanzas may well be selected.

297. **Silly** means *useless*—" the buckets that had so long remained empty."

314. **Sheen:** bright.

285. The movement of the line, with its extra syllable, suggests the motion of the ship.

485. What are these " crimson shadows" ? See next stanza.

516. **Rears:** lifts, in prayer and song.

535. **Ivy-tod:** an ivy bush.

574. **Shrieve:** absolve me from my sins.

623. **Forlorn.** bereft, deprived of.

Love (Page 97)

This poem will help one to understand *The Ancient Mariner*. Here is another supernatural story, made more credible, easier to believe, because the story itself is used as a kind of background for the real human figures of the lover and the girl he loves; just as the story of the wonderful voyage is a background for the figures of the Wedding-guest and the Mariner.

Youth and Age (Page 100)

This subject is of course a favorite one with poets. Byron, for instance, has some beautiful verses on the same subject. But Byron wrote his while still a young man; this poem of Coleridge's is the work of a man old and sad, who looks back on years of failure. Compare its mournful beauty with the gay confidence of *Love*—and read the history of Coleridge!

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Ozymandias of Egypt (Page 105)

Shelley wrote few sonnets. This is his best, perhaps, although as you read on in his poetry you will find it is not like most of his work; it is clean-cut, practical, decisive rather than exalted in spirit, as *The Cloud* is, for example, or the *Ode to the West Wind*.

Stanzas Written in Dejection (Page 105)

Written in 1818, after Shelley's separation from his first wife, and not long after the death of one of his children. He was further downcast by his fear of consumption. But the dejection was not to endure; in the next two years Shelley did his best work. Note the last two lines and their strange foreshadowing of his death.

Written Among the Euganean Hills (Page 107)

Shelley was living at Este, near Venice, at a villa belonging to Byron, when this poem was written. The geographical position of the hills may be gathered from the poem.

Ode to the West Wind (Page 112)

Next to *The Skylark*, this is the most generally popular of Shelley's poems. Note the rime-scheme. It is called "terza rima," or triple rime, and was made famous by Dante in the *Divine Comedy*.

Note that the first three stanzas are in form an apostrophe to the Wind; really a long description of the wind-spirit. The two last stanzas compare the poet's heart, with its wild longings, to the great Wind; the poem ending with the triumphant overcoming of the poet's sadness by the thought of what the Wind's coming prophesies.

The Indian Serenade (Page 115)

A pure lyric—a song of love. The title is merely fanciful. The "champak" is an Indian tree, with yellow fragrant blossoms. Compare the "mood" of this with the *Stanzas Written in Dejection*.

Love's Philosophy (Page 116)

Note the many changes from regular rhythm. In a short song these changes are permissible; in a long poem they would grow tiresome.

A Dream of the Unknown (Page 116)

This title is the one given by Palgrave in *The Golden Treasury*. Shelley himself called the poem *The Question*. In itself a beautiful poem, it is further interesting in the light it throws on the author's own mind and heart. He dreamed all his life of some wonderful transforming force of love, which should change and glorify him and the whole world; but that love he never found; to the end the "question" of the last two words remained unanswered. The poem, as a description of flowers, may be compared with passages from Milton's *Lycidas* (lines 139-151) and from Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale* (Act IV, Scene iv). Certain stanzas in Shelley's own *Sensitive Plant* curiously repeat this description.

The Cloud (Page 118)

The cloud speaks throughout. In few poems has any author taken so many successful liberties with the regularity of rhythm. What is the basic meter? Four beats and three, alternately. The two lines which perhaps come nearest to regularity in this poem are in stanza four—"And wherever the beat of her unseen feet, which only the angels hear." They seem to mark the meter as a free mingling of anapests (∪ ∪ –) and iambs (∪ –). But other feet are constantly employed, as in the line "Lightning my pilot sits," which begins with a trochee (– ∪), and in the line "Over the rills and the crags and the hills," which is made up of dactyls (– ∪ ∪). Further, the second line of the poem can be properly read as consisting of two feet only, both jerky anapests (∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ –); and the fourth line has also two feet only, an anapest (∪ ∪ –) and an iamb (∪ –). So irregularity would appear to triumph. Yet, read aloud, the even and splendid swing of the lines is seen to proceed unchecked. The whole poem is a fine illustration of what a poet who thoroughly understands his technique can do in the way of variation without loss of harmony; it may be compared in this respect to passages in Wagner's music.

To a Skylark (Page 120)

Note the scheme of the stanzas—four lines which rise steadily in strength, as the lark rises, and a fifth line, long, equable, and sustained, as the lark sustains itself while singing. Note the melody—"Sound of vernal showers On the twinkling grass, Rain-awakened flowers"—in these *n*'s and *e*'s and *r*'s may be found the basic notes of the lark's music. The construction is simple—six stanzas describe the lark, six more liken it to what the poet fancies, six more contrast the lark's joy with man's sorrow, and the final three are a burst of passionate delight from the poet over the lark's song. But one thinks of the structure hardly more than he thinks of the "moral" in *The Ancient Mariner*. The poem is, in form and melody, a perfect lyric, as *The Ancient Mariner* is a perfect ballad.

A Song (Page 124)

This and the four following poems were written by Shelley all at about the same time. They are, in a sense, fragments of a greater whole. He was engaged in composing larger works—dramas, the great elegy on Keats, and other long poems—and these songs and bits of verse he wrote in odd hours and in passing moods, as those of us less gifted drum with our fingers while trying to think.

The Invitation (Page 128)

This "invitation" was dedicated to a Mrs. Williams, a friend and neighbor of the Shelleys in the spring before he was drowned. The two poems that immediately follow were also written to her.

A Dirge (Page 136)

All the sadness of Shelley's heart is concentrated in these eight lines. Read them aloud; then read the first sonnet of Keats in this collection, and note the difference in spirit. The comparison will tell you as much of the difference between Shelley and Keats, in temperament, as an hour's talking could.

JOHN KEATS

To One Who Has Been Long in City Pent (Page 139)

This is one of Keats's early sonnets, written when he was little more than a boy. It represents, in its slightly sentimental delight in agreeable things, the weaker side of the poet's nature.

10. Philomel: the nightingale. Philomela, daughter of King Pandion of Athens, was changed into a nightingale after an unhappy life.

On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer (Page 139)

Chapman translated the *Iliad* into English verse in the time of Shakespeare. Keats, who could not read Greek, first made Homer's acquaintance through this translation.

It was of course Balboa, not Cortez, who discovered the Pacific. But Keats wrote the sonnet late one night, upon impulse, and his memory was treacherous. Later, when he discovered his mistake, he saw no reason to change the names. Poetry which is true to emotion need not be true to fact.

Happy Insensibility (Page 140)

15. Petting means "complaining." The word is used in the same sense in the phrase "don't get into a *pet*."

The Eve of St. Agnes (Page 141)

St. Agnes Day is January 21. St. Agnes was a Roman maiden, martyred about 300 A. D. Formerly two lambs were sacrificed upon her altar once a year, upon her Day; and their wool was spun and woven by nuns (see lines 115–117).

Of Keats's longer poems this is undoubtedly the world's favorite. Like *The Ancient Mariner*, it is enough in itself to determine the poet's standing. It is one of the few poems which maintain themselves at a constantly high level of beauty. The story is not of great interest; the poem is rather a series of pictures, in which words go as far as words can go toward actually reproducing color and music. "The carvéd angels, ever eager-eyed, Stared . . . with hair blown back and wings put crosswise on their breasts"; "the silver, snarling trumpets'"; "While legioned fairies paced the coverlet;" "Rose-bloom fell on her hands . . . and on her silver cross soft amethyst, And on her hair a glory"—such passages as these are as near perfect in their achievement of the poet's intentions as anything in the language. Simple adjectives, too, here acquire unusual distinction—"*pallid* moonshine," "her *warméd* jewels," "An *azure-lidded* sleep," "a *throbbing* star," "*rough* ashes." The form of the verse is technically called "Spenserian"—because it was first used by Edmund Spenser in his poem called the *Færie Queene*, in 1590. Study out the scheme of the rimes and observe the number of feet in each line.

218. Gules means "red," in heraldic phrasing. The moon-

light, falling on the coat of arms in the window, threw its color upon Madeline.

241. **A missal where swart Paynims pray.** A missal is a prayer-book. Paynims were the Saracens, against whom the Crusades were directed. The meaning is—shut away unopened like a prayer-book in a land of infidels.

266. **Soother:** softer, smoother.

The Mermaid Tavern (Page 154)

The "Mermaid" was an inn of London which was much used by poets and play-writers about 1600. Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Francis Beaumont, and many others frequented it as a kind of club. Beaumont, writing of it, declares—

> "What things have we seen
> Done at the Mermaid! heard words that have been
> So nimble, and so full of subtle flame,
> As if that everyone from whence they came
> Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest,
> And had resolved to live a fool the rest
> Of his dull life."

The Realm of Fancy (Page 155)

"Fancy" was Keats's own special realm. By reading this poem closely one may form a very clear idea of what the poet enjoyed. Contrast it with Wordsworth's ideals—with the *Ode to Duty* for instance!

Ode on a Grecian Urn (Page 159)

The group of short "odes" of which this is one, represent, along with *The Eve of St. Agnes*, the best of Keats's poetry. The "urn" was some decorated Greek vase which Keats had seen in the British Museum,—or more probably, it was a composite recollection of half-a-dozen such vases, for no vase with the particular scenes he pictures here has ever been identified. Keats's poetical motto, if such it may be called, is written plain in the last two lines—"Beauty is truth, truth beauty"—that is to say, anything really beautiful is right; ugliness shows badness somewhere; and if the world loves beauty

sincerely, all will come well in the end. It is a poet's creed, not a moralist's.

Ode To A Nightingale (Page 161)

This poem was written in one morning, on various scraps of paper, while Keats sat under a tree on a friend's lawn. By this time in his life Keats had begun to suspect that he was a victim of consumption; and the melancholy of his later days may easily be seen in this poem. Kipling calls the lines "Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam Of perilous seas, in færy lands forlorn" among the five most beautiful in English poetry. See the note on *Kubla Khan*.

La Belle Dame Sans Merci (Page 165)

See *The Eve of St. Agnes*, stanza 33. The "ancient ditty" of Provence was an old French poem of eighty verses, of which the title captured Keats's fancy. This poem is a fantasy, a bit of imagination only: it has no resemblance in any way to the original French work, which indeed Keats never read.

Bright Star! Would I were Steadfast (Page 166)

Written at sea, on Keats's last voyage. It was his final poem; he did no more work between the time of this sonnet and his death.

THE LESSER POETS

Gathering Song of Donald the Black (Page 171)

This, like many of Scott's verses, is really a song—supposed to be set to music, and sung by some character in one of his novels or long poems. Scott's poetry needs no comment or explanation; it is easy to read, easy to understand, easy to enjoy.

Coronach (Page 173)

A "coronach" is a lament for the dead. The "correi" is a hunting expedition.

Datur Hora Quieti (Page 175)

Compare this with Scott's *Serenade* as an example of what the poet can do twice with exactly the same theme.

The Rover (Page 176)

One of the most beautiful songs in our language. "A doublet of the Lincoln green," in line 7, takes us back to the time when Robin Hood and his men had their headquarters in Lincolnshire; they wore the "Lincoln green" suits which have since associated the color with outlaws and wanderers generally.

Song to the Evening Star (Page 177)

Compare this with a treatment of the same idea from Byron's *Don Juan:*

> "Oh Hesperus! thou bringest all good things—
> Home to the weary, to the hungry cheer,
> To the young bird the parent's brooding wings,
> The welcome stall to the o'er-labored steer;
> Whate'er of peace about our hearthstone clings,
> Whate'er our household gods protect of dear,
> Are gathered round us by thy look of rest,
> Thou bringst the child, too, to the mother's breast."

Hohenlinden (Page 180)

"This battle was fought Dec. 2, 1800, between the Austrians under Archduke John and the French under Moreau, in a forest near Munich. *Hohen Linden* means *High Limetrees.*" (Palgrave's Note.)

Ye Mariners of England (Page 181)

A sea-song a hundred years old, but as popular now as ever.

Hester (Page 183)

"Hester" was a real person, Hester Savory, a young girl whom Lamb knew, though not well.

On an Infant Dying as Soon as Born (Page 184)

Lamb was particularly fond of the poetry of the early seventeenth century—the time just before and after the death of Shakespeare. He edited a volume of selections from the dramatists of that period, and did all in his power to induce the readers of his generation to cultivate the seventeenth century writers. This poem is not exactly an imitation of seventeenth century verse, but is so entirely in the spirit of it that no one but a very keen critic could tell that it had not been written by some Elizabethan author.

The Old Familiar Faces (Page 186)

The best-known of Lamb's few poems. The "friend" here is Coleridge. Their quarrel was not of long duration. Indeed, it was the death of Coleridge that hastened the death of Lamb.

Past and Present (Page 187)

The first two lines of this poem are perhaps as well known as any in English poetry.

The Burial of Sir John Moore (Page 188)

The introductory sketch of Charles Wolfe gives a short account of the composition of this poem.

A Wet Sheet and a Flowing Sea (Page 192)

This, like *Ye Mariners of England*, is still a popular song everywhere in England. The "hollow oak" is of course a ship—a figure of speech at least as old as Homer.

Wednesday:—

Autobiography of a Freshman

Who should go to college

Is it possible to be individual in school

Learning to dance.

Essay

Book review

Drop in

Art.

Why I am glad

Moments effect on Book Notes

What Jessie don't know about Anne

What she asked at the Game

Investigating Biology

Explanation of Life

Girls names.

Art of talking about Nothing

W. George Barr

"1925"

W. George Barr

/proof of Phonograph/
Are we Ever civilized

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"Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man."

Bacon.

ENGLISH READINGS FOR STUDENTS

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Emerson.